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Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk February 7, 2016

Mid edition No 698

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Concerns raised over
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Why should we care for May's PCC elections?

IT IS fair to say the jury is still very much out on the effectiveness, or otherwise, of the police and crime commissioner role.

There is no denying that it has achieved at least one of its aims - of providing a high profile figure for the public to engage with on policing matters. They may not be able to alter operational aspects - that remains tightly controlled, quite rightly, by the chief constable - but wider issues now have a target.

Yet, it is, right now, something of a poisoned chalice. Not only does it catapult many into the public eye to the extent they forget they can become a target for negative as well as positive, stage-managed, headlines (are you listening Ann Barnes?) but the police budget is, in real terms, in steady decline. And no-one really wants to be the face of yet more cuts. Any politician wants to spend to show intent. That's



Editor **Chris Britcher**

a nigh-on impossibility right now. It's more a case of spreading a decreasing amount of jam over a wider slice of toast. Which is hardly appetising.

So where does that leave us?

Hopefully, it will make us engage this time with the electoral process as May's vote approaches. Some 84 per cent of us couldn't be bothered to turn out last time.

Your politics will, inevitably, make you lean towards a particular candidate, but what is most essential is that we all think long and hard about how

we want the framework of our policing structured.

You may not care much for the role - you may never have seen the point - but better you influence it than ignore it.

Over the coming weeks, we'll be covering the build-up and profiling the candidates to help you make the right

choice. The county's safety, after all, affects every single one of us.

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Will conviction thwart landlord's PCC vote bid?

By Luke May

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A QUESTION mark continues to hang over property magnate Fergus Wilson's ability to stand in this May's police and crime commissioner elections.

The former landlord, who is selling off his Ashford and Maidstone property portfolio for £250 million, has announced his intention to run as a candidate, despite holding a previous conviction for assault.

The conviction relates to an incident in 2013 when he was found guilty of assault by beating, after hitting an estate agent in Folkestone following a row.

He was fined £1,500.

Electoral Commission guidance for potential PCC candidates states: "You cannot stand for election if, on the day of your nomination, and on polling day you have ever been convicted of an imprisonable offence."

"This disqualification applies even if you were not actually imprisoned for that offence, or the conviction has been spent."

Common assault can carry a six-month jail term.



RUNNING? Fergus Wilson has been the most high-profile of the possible candidates for May's PCC election

However, Mr Wilson claims advice given to him states he will be able to run in the election on May 5, as his conviction did not carry a sentencing of more than a year in prison.

He told KoS: "I've been told the process for election works exactly the same as MPs, it's if you've been convicted of a crime carrying a minimum sentence of a year or more."

"People are welcome to complain, but the only people who will

complain are those who feel they are front runners for the election and feel they need to get me out of the picture."

The deadline for nominations is April 7. Mr Wilson has been one of the most high-profile candidates as this early stage with extensive advertising campaigns in the local media – including Kent on Sunday.

While his rivals representing the main parties – such as the Conservatives and Ukip – preferred

not to be drawn into whether Mr Wilson should be allowed to stand or not, his inclusion on the ballot paper would likely generate publicity, both good and bad, for the office. When Ann Barnes won the first election in 2012 she did so on a turn-out of just 16 per cent.

She has so far refused to comment on her intention to stand again.

This year's election takes place on May 5 alongside local elections.

Why if you own a Ford Escort or Cortina you should step up security

CLASSIC vehicle owners are being urged to invest in security equipment after a spate of crimes across the south east – with Kent particularly badly hit.

The International Association of Auto Theft Investigators (IAATI) says the trend to target the vehicles started in 2015 has shows no sign of slowing.

Dr Ken German, communications director at IAATI UK, and a former British Police rally champion, said: "A recent Home Office report highlighted the threat and already in 2016 we've seen modern classic vehicle thefts across the UK."

"Criminal gangs are targeting 1980s classic cars, but also motorbikes, vans and campervans. The south east, and Kent in particular, is the hotspot, probably due to the speed at which vehicles can be moved out of the country to Europe and beyond."

"Models such as Cortinas and Escorts were changing hands for a

few hundred quid a decade ago, but as their numbers have dwindled they have become increasingly desirable. I've heard theories that they might be being stolen for banger racing or parts, but I suspect it's all about the resale value. Enthusiasts and collectors will pay thousands, sometimes tens of thousands of pounds for a nice example."

"When you add in the fact that most don't have the security systems that come as standard on modern cars, you can see the attraction for criminals."

"Classic vehicle owners need to react, first by dismissing the idea that 'it won't happen to me' and second by taking practical steps to protect their asset."

"Alarms, engine immobilisers, tracking devices and the new DNA invisible markings can all be wise investments. Bear in mind you should always opt for insurance industry and Thatcham listed products."

A249 at Bobbing returns to normal after major repairs

THE Sheppey-bound section of the A249 at Bobbing is expected to be fully re-opened this weekend after a burst water main forced it to be closed almost four weeks ago.

Motorists have faced delays and diversion after the leak which then saw sinkholes form along the road between A2 Key Street and Bobbing, near Sittingbourne.

Both lanes were back in action in

time for Friday's rush hour with the northbound exit slip road at the Bobbing junction expected to re-open yesterday (Saturday).

The northbound carriageway has had temporary restrictions since the water main underneath the road burst on January 11, leaving a large void. The sinkhole was filled with concrete and the section of road repaired.

Win tickets to Leeds Castle concert with Images of Kent

PHOTOGRAPHERS sending in pictures for use on our Images of Kent page now have the chance to win tickets to one of the county's cultural highlights of the year.

We have teamed up with the organisers of the Leeds Castle Classical Concert, taking place on July 9, to give away a pair of tickets each month.

And those going into the draw – which will take place at the end of

February, March, April, May and June will be those who have had their photo featured in the Images of Kent section of Kent on Sunday that month.

Images of Kent, which runs next to the letters page, showcases our readers' shots which capture all aspects of the county.

So to be in with a chance, send us your pictures to editorial@kosmedia.co.uk today.



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Woman flees after men demand she get in car

A CAR load of men attempted to lure an 18-year-old woman into their car forcing her to flee in fear.

Now police are appealing for information following the incident which took place along Longfield Road in Tunbridge Wells, between 4pm and 4.35pm on January 28. The car, thought to be a grey Volkswagen Golf, drove past with a passenger leaning out of the

window to nudge the woman's bag. There were a number of passengers in the back.

The driver then reportedly stopped the car and one of the men demanded that she get in, before she ran away. One of the men is described as being white, bald and in his 30s and another man was said to also be in his 30s with short brown hair.



HOST: Suggs will comper the event

Madness star set for JoJo's charity auction

MADNESS frontman Suggs is to host a special charity auction in Whitstable, with monies raised in support of refugees in Calais.

Taking place at the popular JoJo's restaurant on Marine Parade, Tankerton, it is the latest initiative by chef and eatery owner Nikki Billington, who has been making regular trips to France since last autumn with donations of food and other supplies for the Calais camp that has become known as the Jungle.

Now she has persuaded the singer from the group – who has a house in the seaside town – to front the auction on February 28 from 2pm.

Suggs said: "I'm really pleased to be able to help this fundraiser. I've known Nikki for some time and she's an amazing woman who's already doing great things for the many people and children who are trapped in this no-man's land across the Channel from us. She deserves for us all to get behind what promises to be a fantastic event for a very good cause. Every penny will go directly to help the people of the Calais Jungle."

There is space for 70 guests on the night, who will enjoy a four-course meal, live music and a host of other entertainment. Tickets cost £120 each and are available now from the restaurant.

Duo face life terms after killing OAP in 'vicious' knife attack in his home

By Luke May

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A KILLER who boasted he had "got away with murder" is facing a life sentence behind bars after being found guilty of the killing of Faversham pensioner John Birney.

A jury at Maidstone Crown Court found John Barham, 25, formerly of Quarry Road, Maidstone, and Allison Tomlin, 48, of no fixed address, guilty of killing the 69-year-old at his Rocky Hill Terrace flat on June 8, 2015. They will be sentenced soon.

He was found with multiple stab wounds to his head and believed to have been undiscovered for some time.

Arrested and originally released by police at the time of the crime, Barham then boasted to several people how he had got away with murder. He was subsequently rearrested after police were informed.

And on Thursday, both he and Tomlin were found guilty following a seven-week trial.

The court heard Mr Birney's body



VICTIM: John Birney

was discovered at the flats after a neighbour voiced concerns that she had not seen him for some time.

Officers attended and found a blood-stained knife lying next to him and another blade beneath the

sofa bed on which he was lying. A dark-coloured coat belt was also tied tightly around his left wrist.

It was quickly established that Barham had visited Mr Birney's flat around the time of his death, and that Tomlin had also been seen with him on more than one occasion.

Following their arrests, forensic tests concluded that the victim's blood was on a pair of jeans belonging to Barham and that Tomlin's DNA was found on both knives and various other items in the flat. The belt tied around Mr Birney's wrist is also believed to have come from her coat.

Senior investigating officer Inspector Lee Whitehead said: "We may never know the truth behind why they did what they did to John Birney but it was clear to the jury that they intended to kill him."

"Whatever the reason, there can be no doubt that this was a vicious attack and that Mr Birney suffered as a result. He and Tomlin are clearly very dangerous individuals and can look forward to spending a lengthy period of time behind bars."

Volunteer appeal for major marine project

BUDDING Thanet scientists are being invited to help make history by being part of the largest coastal marine citizen science project ever undertaken.

Volunteers from the Thanet Coast Project Coastal Warden scheme will be trained alongside new volunteers for the nationwide Capturing Our Coast project, funded through a successful £1.7m Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

The aim of the project, led by Newcastle University and including the Marine Conservation Society and Marine Biological Association, is to recruit and train more than 3,000 volunteers to help build a more accurate picture of the marine life around the UK's shores.

Volunteers from the Thanet Coast Project and anyone interested in being involved, can take part by registering their interest online at www.nekmpa.org.uk. The first training day has been scheduled for all day on Monday, April 4.

Registration will be open online from March.

Gardeners' Question Time heads to Hadlow

AN EPISODE of BBC Radio 4's ever-popular Gardeners' Question Time is to be recorded at Hadlow College later this month.

The celebrated panel of gardening experts will be on hand to tackle all manner of perplexing horticultural questions put to them by local gardening enthusiasts, with Eric Robson in the chair and the team consisting of Matt Biggs, Pippa Greenwood and Anne Swinbank.

Gardeners' Question Time, which attracts over two million listeners a week, is recorded in a different location each week, and will come to the county on Thursday, February 18.

Stephen Harmer, landscape and horticulture lecturer at Hadlow College and a teacher of garden history at RHS Wisley, said: "We're thrilled to have the Gardeners' Question Time team here at Hadlow."

"It's a great opportunity to show the college's close connections to the horticultural industry."

Tickets cost £4, including refreshments, available from the Broadview Garden Centre at the college.

MEP Janice Atkinson will not face charges

POLICE this week confirmed they will take no further action against south east Euro MP Janice Atkinson over an expenses row which saw her booted out of Ukkip.

Mrs Atkinson had been set to stand for Ukkip for the Folkestone and Hythe seat in last May's general election, but was caught up in allegations she was involved in swindling an expenses claim. She was kicked off the ballot paper and out of the party.

Now serving in Europe as an independent MEP, Mrs Atkinson has been cleared of any involvement. Mrs Atkinson said she was 'delighted'.

She said: "I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my family, friends and the colleagues who believed in me. It has been a truly terrible time and I have learnt a major lesson about the value of integrity in my working relationships."

"As soon as you take on a public position you become vulnerable. Like others, I have made mistakes and apologised for them but I will always continue to fight for the issues that affect my constituents."

KCC told to drop support for lower Thames crossing route

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

OPPOSITION groups have come out fighting after last week's announcement that the preferred option for a lower Thames crossing was for east of Gravesend.

Highways England began an eight-week consultation into the multi-billion pound project – opting for the Gravesham option over an alternative at Dartford.

But this week the decision has come under fire from both local residents, and a leading property consultants.

Abridge2far, a local group opposing the plan, kicked off the week by demanding Kent County Council (KCC) withdraw its support for the 'Option C' proposal.

A spokesman for the group said: "KCC's two main preconditions for supporting the crossing have been rejected by Highways England.

"At the time of the previous consultation on the location of the proposed crossing in 2013, KCC strongly supported Option C 'on the condition that the connection to the M2 is moved westwards thus connecting into the A2'.

"The widening of the A229 between the M2 and M20 was also an integral part of KCC's support. In the latest consultation, Highways England has recommended the connection



PLANS: How the new tunnel could look if it gets the go ahead

should not be moved westward to the A2 as KCC's conditional support demanded. They have also dismissed the widening of the A229 which was integral to KCC's preferred option.

"Abridge2far has asked if Paul Carter and KCC will now withdraw their support since neither of their conditions have been met, and will now instead support the thousands of Kent residents whose lives will be devastated by this monstrous plan, and call for it to be scrapped."

KCC failed to comment, despite requests. Meanwhile, property consultants the BTF

Partnership said the plans would "blight farms, businesses, and cause misery for property owners".

Tom French, from BTF, said: "I would strongly advise all those potentially affected to take part in the consultation, but it should be done with the need to 'play smart' and not get over emotional.

"The key is to 'manage' this period of uncertainty and understand your position.

"It's not a question of if it's built, but when it's built."

Probe into dead dog found dumped in bag

THE body of a dog found dumped in a tied-up bag in a brook near Maidstone has sparked an appeal for information from the RSPCA.

The dead adult Jack Russell terrier was found inside the large dog food bag, tied up with twine by a passing dog walker between Lees and Benover Road in Yalding last Sunday.

RSPCA inspector Rosie Russon said: "It is possible she may have been alive when dumped."

Mental health service all set for April launch

A NEW mental health and wellbeing service for the county launches in April.

The service will aim to promote people's recovery from mental health challenges and support them to re-engage with their community. It will be delivered by the Shaw Trust and Porchlight.

It was commissioned by Kent's seven CCGs.

Universities cash in

LATEST figures have revealed the University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University contribute £909m to the city and generate 16 per cent of all jobs in Canterbury – the equivalent of 9,900 positions.

The report, by researchers Viewforth Consulting Ltd, examined the impact of the activities of the institutions on the city between 2014 and 2015.

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Sir Terry Wogan dined well on final filming trip to Kent

RADIO and TV legend Sir Terry Wogan was filming in Kent last summer – just months before he was told he had cancer.

The presenter, whose death was announced last Sunday, was shooting scenes for the 20-part Terry and Mason's Great Food Trip.

Sir Terry shot scenes having breakfast in the much loved entertainer following his death, following a short battle with cancer.

They also filmed at Chiddingstone, The Pantile in Tunbridge Wells and Penshurst Place, near Tonbridge.

Tributes have been pouring in all week for the much loved entertainer following his death, following a short battle with cancer.

Broadcaster Gloria Hunniford, a



long-time friend and colleague, who lives in Sevenoaks, said: "He was very generous of spirit, a terrific family man and had a unique sense of everything."

"Terry always talked about his

Irish roots, he loved anything to do with an Irish story and he loved Irish music.

"There'll never be anybody like him in broadcasting again, I believe."

Commuter compensation confirmed by train firm

TRAIN firm Southeastern this week confirmed it will compensate passengers affected by the Dover sea wall collapse on Christmas Eve.

Passengers have faced taking alternative routes after the wall, which supports the track between Dover Priory and Folkestone, showed cracks and large sinkholes appeared alongside the rails. No services have operated there since, and engineers say it is likely to remain shut for months.

Now Southeastern says it will refund the difference in cost between mainline and high speed fares to those travelling from Sandwich, Deal, Walmer, Martin Mill or Dover Priory since the collapse.

It will also give all season ticket holders from the affected

stations a 20 per cent refund on the cost of their mainline fare, which will be backdated for January.

Passengers renewing or purchasing tickets are advised to purchase a mainline ticket, which will be valid on all high speed and mainline services until further notice.

David Statham, managing director at Southeastern, said: "We know this closure has caused a lot of frustration and inconvenience."

"This compensation is in recognition of the loss of (direct) high speed services and extra journey times for these passengers."

"We'll continue to work on what we can do to provide more journey options whilst the line is closed."

Come Dine With You?

POPULAR Channel 4 series Come Dine With Me is looking for couples from east Kent to feature in new episodes.

The show pits amateur cooks against one another in pursuit of a £1,000 prize for delivering the perfect dinner party.

For more information, call 0871 200 3939.

Historic hall hit by blaze

TWENTY fire crews tackled a major blaze in the historic Assembly Rooms in Faversham on Tuesday night.

The building, originally built in the 1830s, saw damage in the roof. The hall itself was undamaged. An investigation into the cause of the fire is under way.

Star to host media bash

CHANNEL 4 broadcaster Cathy Newman is to host the Kent Press & Broadcast Awards ceremony in July.

The journalist is one of Channel 4 News' main studio presenters.

The ceremony takes place at the St Lawrence Ground in Canterbury.

Gorilla Ju Ju, 54, dies

KEEPERS and visitors to popular wild animal park Howletts have been mourning the death of 54-year-old gorilla Ju Ju.

Originally born in the wild in Cameroon in 1962, she was described by staff as a "gentle giant".

She died following a suspected stroke.

A great start to the New Year at Bridge Haven Care Home

avante^o
care & support
"Everyone Matters"

'All the staff are very caring at Bridge Haven. I visit on a regular basis and at different times throughout the week, yet I am always greeted with the same high level of service and kindness which reassures me that my husband is being well looked after'.

Bridge Haven care home in Bridge near Canterbury has recently undertaken the final stage of its refurbishment programme, where the central core area has been refurbished and is now complete together with the redecoration of corridors, new bedroom front doors, electronic access door control system and a new nurse-call system.

The work not only refreshes the core areas of Bridge Haven but also incorporates a high tech cinema room, for residents to sit back and watch their favourite films with friends and family. The reception area at the front of the home, a nice quiet area where families often sit with loved ones when visiting, has also been revamped for visitors and residents to enjoy refreshments and snacks from the coffee lounge area.

Bridge Haven is a 53 bedded home that provides residential care, day care and short term respite care for those living with dementia. The home is situated in the picturesque village of Bridge surrounded by rolling countryside yet only a few miles away from the Cathedral City of Canterbury. Bridge Haven has been developed to a high standard ensuring living with dementia doesn't get in the way of an active life.

For more information or to arrange a viewing please call the Home Manager on 01227 831607

✉ enquiry@avantecare.org.uk

🏠 Conyngham Lane, Bridge, Canterbury CT4 5JX @ avantecare.org.uk



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Top Three Stories



1. Manhunt after death

Armed police search Kent train

2. Missing teenager found

Concerns allayed after major appeal

3. Stadium expansion

United set to boost its capacity further

The Essential Guide:



...to Dreamland

Everything you need to know about Margate's amusement park



FEATURED PHOTO GALLERY: Sand artist Ross Andrews has now turned his focus - and camera - on remarkable images shot through the barrel of a wave, and in doing so captured the best of Kent's coastline. More are featured on pages 22-23.

Missed last week's...?

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Top Three Blogs



1. Door opening etiquette

You'll be surprised how cross it makes folk

2. Power of nostalgia

Why it exerts such an emotional punch

3. Smartphone addiction

Do we just need to put them down more?

Results of the KoS Online Poll

Is Option C the best for lower Thames crossing?

- 1 It should be in Gravesend - 38%
- 2 It should be in Dartford - 38%
- 3 We don't need another one - 13%
- 4 Undecided - 13%

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Brave Gurkhas caught up in huge financial fraud scam

Police have appealed to Gurkhas communities in the county to come forward if they believe they are a victim of a £50m Ponzi scheme which is now centre of a major investigation

By Georgina Stubbs
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

HUNDREDS of Gurkhas who may be victims of a suspected £50 million fraudulent Ponzi scheme are being urged to come forward by police.

Since October 2014, City of London Police have been investigating Capital World Market, based in the City, which was offering five per cent interest per month to investors.

Ponzi schemes are fraudulent investment operations which pay returns to its investors from new capital paid to the operators by new investors, rather than from profit earned by the operator.

And it is feared the Gurkha communities in Kent – particularly in Maidstone, Ashford and Shepway – could have fallen victim.

Detectives have heard from some potential victims of how they have invested sums from the thousands to the millions – seeing little or no return – but it is thought the majority of alleged victims were from the Gurkha and Nepalese community, and are yet to come forward.

Detective Chief Inspector Dave Manley said evidence suggests that hundreds of members of the Gurkha and Nepalese community may have been targeted.

He said: "Out of the 450 Gurkha and Nepalese alleged victims that we believe may have invested, less than one per cent from that community have come forward so far.

"The others are a large piece of the jigsaw that is missing – the harm caused to individuals, their families, their pension pots and life savings – at the moment is not being represented within the case.

"The story of how this has impacted and affected people needs to be told in the judicial process. It would be a shame for us to get to the next stage and the level of harm that's been caused to the community is not measured or part of the case."

Action Fraud states on its website that Ponzi schemes are "get rich quick investment scams," and that there is no actual investment as "the fraudsters siphon off the money for themselves".

In an intelligence-led investigation, detectives swooped on the alleged scam before the cash ran out, but Mr Manley said payments to investors would have dried up that month.

Gary Ghale, from the Gurkha Welfare Trust, said it is the first time he has heard of this type of scheme involving so many people from the Gurkha and Nepalese communities, and that he can think of three reasons potential victims may be reluctant to come forward.

"Firstly, they might not have heard of the investigation," he said. "Secondly, it is because they are worried they might be implicated in this investigation."

"And thirdly because of

the embarrassing situation they are in."

The Royal Gurkha Rifles' current regimental home is the Sir John Moore Barracks in Shorncliffe, Folkestone.

He added: "We would recommend those who believe they have fallen victim to contact the police. Their case will be treated with care and absolute confidence and they will be treated as victims and not as suspects.

"We believe it is in people's best interest to come forward."

Mr Manley said those that invested may have encouraged friends and family to do the same, believing they were simply introducing them to a good deal and opportunity.

He said of the £50 million invested only £1m of that has been recovered – equating to 2p in every pound for the wider pool of between 600-800 victims.

"There is still money missing, but I have some doubts as to whether any more will be found. The only justice people are going to get is if their story is told," he added.

The appeal comes nine months after the City of London Police arrested 10 men and three women, all of whom work at the City-based foreign exchange trading company, on suspicion of fraud by false representation and money laundering.

Detectives, supported by the Financial Conduct Authority, also seized a host of computers and documentary evidence. The 13 suspects were questioned and released on bail until March. Another man has since been arrested and is also on bail.

Those who think they may have fallen prey to the scheme should call the City of London Police on 020 7601 6830 or email opvanburgh@cityoflondon.pnn.police.uk.



COMMUNITIES: Gurkhas, like those pictured above, have served the British Army for decades

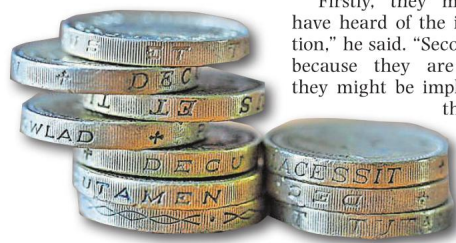


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Growers pray for chills as mild winter risks key crop

While our energy bills have benefited from mild temperatures our apple and pear growers say they are 'staring down barrel of a gun'. **Chris Murphy** reports

GROWERS of apples and pears are facing disaster this year if the weather doesn't get colder right now.

The fruit, so often synonymous with the county, desperately needs freezing weather to help with this year's harvest.

Our biggest grower, AC Goatham & Son, said the arrival of the recent chill of winter following the warmest December on record has been welcome, but is not enough.

Now a leading expert in the field says farmers are "looking down the barrel of a gun".

Orchards need a minimum of 820 hours for apples and 620 hours for pears at temperatures below 7.2C, to help the new fruit and leaf buds to develop in the spring.

Nigel Jenner is an agronomist for the British Growers Association and also works at his family's Great Shephurst Farm, at Marden, where 120 of the 150 acre total is dedicated to apples and pears.

He told us: "We need colder weather and while it has been a bit chilly we haven't had anything like enough of it. It has been desperate.

"Apart from one week, the average daytime temperature has been around 10 degrees, it is far, far too warm and that is going to cause problems.

"It is too early to say if there is going to be a major shortage. Over the next two weeks, we need freezing temperatures if the September crop is going to be saved.

"It is not too late to save it, but we are getting to the stage where if it doesn't change in the next couple of weeks it will be too late. The trees will break dormancy. As it is, because December was so mild, many have not

reached proper dormancy as it is. "They will get to budburst and that will be it. We are absolutely looking down the barrel of a gun here."

The Goatham empire is spread over 16 farms with 20 partner farms across Medway and Kent.

Together they account for almost 20 per cent of British apples sold in the UK and a third of all conference pears. It annually produces some 150 million apples.

Nigel Stewart, technical director at the company, said: "To a lot of people, growing apples and pears is as simple as planting the tree and waiting for the fruit to blossom but that isn't the case. There is a lot of hard work that goes in to growing fruit, especially over the winter months.

"When flower and leaf buds are formed during the summer and autumn, growth inhibitors accumulate, preventing the buds from opening during the winter. Chilling is then required to break down these growth inhibitors and ensure the buds open at the right time of year. Each tree needs a specific number of chill hours below a certain temperature to break dormancy and that varies from variety to variety.

"Pears require a minimum of 620 hours and apples need at least 820 hours of exposure to the cold. We keep a close eye on the weather over the winter months and a track record of the number of chill hours. If the trees get insufficient chilling, then they may suffer from delayed or uneven flowering and leafing which can lead to poorer crops.

"As of February 2, our orchards at Bredgar, Sittingbourne, had benefited from the most chill hours totalling 788 hours, whilst Canterbury had received the least with around 535 hours, so

quite a contrast across the region."

Adds Nigel Jenner: "We can't do anything about it, just hope the weather suddenly gets a lot colder for a longer period.

"I was in a pear orchards last week, and I was finding the odd blossom which is ridiculous because pears would normally be in blossom at the end of April.

"And I am finding some blossom trusses now. It is absolutely crazy.

"That would potentially be fruit bud and now that is not going to make it now.

"If you are asking me for my prediction for the fruit season at this stage, I would say we could struggle.

"Nature is a funny thing and you are never quite sure what it is going to be in the next couple of months.

"This is a vital time of year. What you really need is for the trees to shut down properly and get properly dormant, and that just hasn't happened.

"The only positive is that I have not used as much heating oil this year but in terms of the job, we are desperate for two weeks of zero or below weather to get some proper dormancy in the trees. After two weeks, it will all be too late and the horse will have bolted."

At Broomfield Farm in Meopham, John Tobutt has 12 acres of apples and pears.

He told us: "Generally speaking, things have been too warm for us. We need the really cold weather to slow the trees down. They are getting ahead of themselves.

"With blossom coming out now, we are in danger of then getting a really cold spell further down the road and that will completely kill off the fruit.

"A late frost will destroy the fruit as it is in transition. They are very delicate at that stage, which is why they need to blossom later rather than sooner. We are just hoping the weather changes soon or we could be in trouble this year."

Apple trees are typically in blossom for 14 days however blossom time varies depending on the variety. The length of time the tree is in blossom will also vary depending on the weather. The pollination period is therefore crucial so it is important pollinator trees are in flower at the same time as the main variety.

THREAT: Without a cold snap, it can play havoc with the growth of apples





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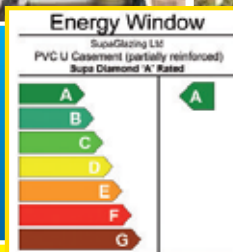
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Should we be losing sleep over £40m LED street lighting?

After the controversy of the partial switch-off of the county's street lights, this week County Hall will discuss plans to switch them all back on again - but this time with new energy-efficient bulbs. But some say it may not be a bright idea...

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

THOSE opposed to a £40 million scheme to replace our street lamp bulbs with light emitting diode (LED) technology, say it could leave our homes bathed in a light which makes it difficult to sleep.

And although council chiefs have been quick to claim it has plans in place to enable it tackle any such problems, it is casting a shadow over claims of the brave new, more environmentally-friendly world.

Following on from the hugely controversial decision to turn off some street lighting at certain points at night, the switch to LED should mean everywhere is illuminated again.

But it is the nature of the illumination which is causing some anxiety.

From March, 38 months of work will begin to convert the county's 118,000 street lights to LEDs after a contract was awarded by Kent County Council (KCC) last week.

With the current bill for Kent's street lights, and lit signs, standing at £9.5m a year in maintenance, electricity costs and the associat-

ed carbon tax, changes are being implemented which KCC says will save tax payers up to £5.2m a year.

The savings are expected to come as a result of the newly-upgraded lighting being connected to an individual central management system (CMS) that will allow the council to monitor and adapt lighting levels in the future.

The £40m project is being partly funded by a £22m loan from Salix, a government organisation, funded by the Department of Energy and Climate Change, which provides interest-free loans to the public sector.

When calculating the savings, KCC claims the work will pay for itself within eight years.

However, the council has been challenged over a number of issues brought by the introduction of LEDs, particularly with regards to health and conservation of key heritage sites in the county.

LEDs are available in a variety of correlated colour temperatures (CCT).

A CCT is a specification of the colour appearance of light when it is emitted, related to temperature measured in degrees Kelvin (K).

The International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) - an organisation that works to help stop light pollution - has set a recommended CCT limit of 3000K for outdoor lighting, as a high CCT would lead to potentially damaging levels of 'blue' light. KCC has yet to confirm the levels deployed in Kent's lighting proposed but say it will be carefully monitored.

While these type of lights tend to be up to 15 per cent more efficient than 'yellow' lights - therefore making them a popular choice among authorities making changes - they are believed to carry health risks.

Exposure to such light at night time has been shown to affect the body's pattern of sleeping and waking, while there have also been links - albeit tenuous ones - between decreased melatonin, which such exposure creates, and an increased risk of cancer.

This is not a particularly new phenomenon, with scientists long warning about the dangers of using our smartphones and other electronic devices in bed.

Simon Nicholas is a Cardiff-based engineer who has campaigned across the country against the introduction of

MEETING:

The KCC cabinet will discuss street lighting at a meeting this week at County Hall



North & West

“ Councils were initially in complete denial about the health issues of LED lighting but now there is evidence available they can't ignore it...”

Simon Nicholas,
Campaigner against LED lights



SHINE: The traditional yellow light from our lamps is set to be replaced with a carefully controlled LED light

LED lights, and successfully forced councils to pull out of plans to install them in other areas of the UK.

He said: “Councils were initially in complete denial about the health issues but now there is evidence

available they can't ignore it.

“If you are spending millions on LEDs you need a specification which

is environmentally benign and not affecting health and I'm not sure that's the case in Kent.

“I don't think local authorities have the skill set to carry out the necessary due diligence.

“They are relying on it being all-right on the night.”

However, any fears were dismissed by KCC cabinet member for environment and transport, Matthew Balfour, who insisted that plenty of research had been done.

He told KoS: “Potential health risks were given considerable discussion because it would be wrong to spend a great deal of money and find out they were dangerous.

“I can't be 100 per cent certain but we have found there to be no safety risk to LED lighting.”

Ideas such as these are not mere theories, though – when the changes were rolled out in other areas of the country, homeowners complained about the glare of the lights on residential roads, which was so harsh and severe that it meant they struggled to sleep.

Mr Nicholas revealed that the LED lights outside his apartment are so bright that it looks like daylight, and as a result, birds begin singing as early as 3.20am.

Dr George Dobre, senior lecturer in applied optics at the University of Kent, said: “The way the eye works means you're always going to find this kind of light harsher and less pleasant on our eyes at night.

“This is because they are more sensitive to shorter wavelengths than in the day, so blue light being produced will tend to appear brighter.”

Furthermore, the glare of some LED lights is so potent that they are banned in some art galleries because

Continued on page 16



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In addition to fears over health and sleeping patterns, concerns have been raised over the aesthetics of the street lights, which have been viewed in other areas of the UK as an ugly blot on the urban landscape.

However, conservation officers were coy when quizzed on the impact the lights would have on Kent's historic environment, and the glare of LED lights beaming down on the likes of the cathedrals in Canterbury and Rochester or Tunbridge Wells' the Pantiles.

A spokesperson for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council said: "Apparently the county's conservation officers are considering this issue at their next meeting so I don't think we can pre-empt that."

"I gather they're considering the impact on heritage areas but obviously the health issues are not within their remit."

Stephen Peckham, chair of Canterbury district Green Party, added: "A lot of councils tend to put the brightest lights on key traffic roads where you are not too bothered about the aesthetics."

"They then put a lower Kelvin measure – usually between 3000K and 4000K – on residential roads."

"I don't know what KCC's intentions are but hopefully they will adopt a similar approach and historic locations in the county won't be adversely affected."

"Producing a more intelligent control system is a really key point."

Mr Nicholas added: "Aesthetically they're not particularly pleasing, and

“ There will have to be discussions about luminosity and once the ball is rolling we can set up a system where communities can make requests... ”

Matthew Balfour,
Kent County Council



I think the people that design them are trying to make a fashion statement.

"Unless there's a specific need for a

fancy design, most run-of-the-mill lamp posts should just blend into their surroundings.

"It's indicative of this culture where

we need to make all technology look sexy."

While Cllr Balfour admitted he didn't know the CCT specification that would be used, he insisted the brightness would be controlled so as not to cause harm or discomfort.

He said: "Where the concerns are is the spectrum of colour, and we've specified a 'natural white'."

"I don't think people necessarily like the way the lights currently look so it's a positive change."

"There are sensitive places like cathedrals where extra care needs to be taken to enhance them rather than make them look horrid."

"There will have to be discussions about luminosity and hopefully once the ball is rolling we can set up a system where communities can go to the first level of local government and make specific requests."

"This can then make its way up the local government family and through joint transport boards and I see no reason why we can't have that kind of flexibility - that's the beauty of the CMS."

"By embracing LED lighting in one of the largest projects of its kind in the United Kingdom, we can make significant savings to our electricity bill and cut our carbon footprint."

"We will prioritise residential areas before tackling town centres, and the main roads."

With a longer lifespan than their traditional sodium and fluorescent bulb counterparts, lasting up to 100,000 hours in some cases, the introduction of LEDs means there will be fewer bulbs filling up landfill sites in Kent following the switch.

And because they contain no toxic materials, they can also be recycled.

The work will be carried out by Bouygues Energies and Services Infrastructure, after securing the big-money contract.

Managing director Edward Peeke said: "This is exactly the approach we believe needs to be adopted across the country to move to a low energy, low maintenance street lighting network."

However, KCC was unable to confirm what will happen to the existing lights, which Mr Nicholas felt didn't make good financial sense.

He said: "It has to be questioned whether this is a good investment."

"It seems to me that KCC has just decided to rip out the existing lights, throw 118,000 bulbs in a skip and install LED lights irrespective of value."

"Other councils are beginning to be more prudent and doing it in a more measured way, with a gradual installation over a long period of time."

A return to all-night street lighting will be discussed by the council next week, after results of a consultation revealed it a preferable option to part-night lighting.

KCC sought views on its plans over a ten-week period, after a switch-off trial received claims of an increase in crime in some areas, and local residents left feeling vulnerable.

Of the 3,700 responses to the consultation, 63 per cent said they preferred the county's streets to be lit throughout the night, while the remaining 37 per cent said they preferred part-night lighting at the current level.

The findings are set to be debated at a meeting of the environment and transport cabinet committee on Friday.



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SERVICE: The Princess Anne during her days serving in Kent. Now all efforts are focused on saving it so it can remain a popular attraction at a Hampshire hovercraft museum

Last gasp bid to stop hovercraft being blown onto the scrapheap

Land ownership dispute puts future of historic cross-Channel craft in doubt. **Chris Murphy** reports...

THEY were so different, crowds regularly gathered to watch the giant hovercraft leave from Dover, but now the last two remaining are in danger of being turned in to scrap.

A major campaign has been launched to save the Princess Margaret and Princess Anne, both former regulars on the Kent coast before the more cost-effective catamarans took over the lucrative cross-Channel business.

The two magnificent hovercraft are now the most popular exhibits at the Hovercraft Museum at Lee-on-Solent in Hampshire.

But after a protracted legal battle, ownership of the land and the two hovercraft is in the hands of the government's Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

And it wants to sell it off to a developer to build homes and businesses.

That means one is almost certain to become scrap, but now the fight is on to save the other.

That means the bulldozers are on their way and the museum, backed by the Dover-based British Hovercraft Company, is making a desperate bid to the agency to allow at least one of the two SRN4 hovercraft to remain in place at the museum, which will be allowed to stay in business.

It's important as these are the last two of their kind in existence.

The hovercraft have been on the site since they were decommissioned in 2000, but due to building work the small volunteer-run museum has

been closed to visitors for most of the last two years - only re-opening in January.

But this latest legal battle casts a shadow over the land which houses the hovercraft.

More than 11,000 people have already signed a petition calling for them to be saved - but there are mounting concerns it may be too late.

Ownership of the hovercraft has been a major bone of contention and the HCA is now the owner of both the land and craft.

Behind the public campaign is Emma Pullen, who runs The Hovercraft Company in Dover, and is a trustee of the museum.

She told us: "There has been a long-running legal battle that we have not been allowed to talk about until now.

"After the legal storm died down, the HCA is now the new owner, and we are appealing to them to allow at least one hovercraft to remain at the museum.

"They do face destruction and removal unless a last-minute reprieve is granted by the site owner.

"These SRN4's are the centre point of the museum and our most important exhibits. Many people come simply to see these huge relics from a bygone age and their loss would be an enormous blow to the museum. But more important than that is the fact that they are a piece of British history, the like of which we will never see again.

"The Hovercraft Museum trust is dedicated to preserving them and we hope that a deal can be reached to al-

low this to happen. The final decision is out of our hands and this has all happened at very short notice but we will do everything in our powers to protect at least one of these national treasures."

In a bid to stave off them being scrapped, the museum has rapidly submitted a proposal to HCA to save at least the Princess Anne which is in the most favourable location and in better condition than the Princess Margaret, which the museum has reluctantly accepted is likely to be broken up and sold for scrap.

Ms Pullen said: "It would be a tragic loss if they were broken up. They are important symbols of British innovation and engineering.

"What they accomplished is incredible and they really cannot be lost just to make way for a few houses. I know this area is a prime seafront property, but sometimes history and culture is more important.

"They are national treasures. Everyone knows about these hovercraft and to see them up close is still quite awe inspiring."

The engines have been removed, but it should be possible to use huge industrial blowers to get them into the air once more. Ms Pullen said they have already done this a couple of times but moving them a long distance could be logistically impossible.

They were built on the Isle of Wight by the British Hovercraft Corporation in the 1970s and operated from both Dover and Pegwell Bay.



OVER: Craft at the museum

could bring hundreds of jobs to the local area.

"In order to further develop the site, we have been working with local partners to find a solution, and a new home for the hovercraft."

Hovercraft first made the crossing between Calais to Dover as they were tested on the route. That first journey included inventor Sir Christopher Cockerell on board.

The first cross-Channel passenger service started in 1966 and operated from Pegwell Bay to Calais. It was followed, two years later, by a car service between Dover to Boulogne - a route it completed on its inaugural journey in a mere 25 minutes.

The Princess Margaret came into service in 1968 and was followed, a year later, by the Princess Anne - the two craft now at the centre of the ownership dispute.

The popularity of the high speed service rose throughout the 1970s and peaked in the early 1980s.

In 1982 it is estimated the vessels were carrying a remarkable 2.5 million passengers and 400,000 cars in just six months alone.

But as the ferry firms unleashed ever more luxurious travel, and started to eye the more modern looking catamarans, the writing was on the wall for the craft. They continued to serve the Isle of Wight but the cross-Channel service was over.

To find out more and to add your name to the petition, visit www.hovercraft-museum.org.uk.

How childhood home in Kent helped inspire author's glory

Molly Kersey-Law speaks to Costa Book of the Year winner Frances Hardinge on the whirlwind which followed her triumph and youth growing up in Penshurst

AN author who spent part of her childhood living in Kent is 'thunderstruck' after receiving the Costa Book of the Year Award – becoming only the second author in history to have won the title with a children's book.

Frances Hardinge won the award with her seventh book, *The Lie Tree*.

Set in the Victorian era, it tells the story of a young girl called Faith who decides to investigate the mysterious circumstances surrounding her father's death.

She discovers a tree that only bears fruit when it is fed with lies.

And it proved such a hit with the judges of the prestigious contest she became only the second children's author to be named the winner.

The other was Phillip Pullman for his acclaimed *The Amber Spyglass* in 2001.

Now Ms Hardinge says it is taking her time to get used to her win.

"It's overwhelming but in a very nice way," she told KoS.

"It's still very gradually sinking in. "For the first few days I was thun-

derstruck. I still am to be honest."

So how does it feel to have received the same prize as such a well-known literary name?

"That feels unreal," she said.

"Philip Pullman is a giant in children's fiction, I am not in the same league, but it's an amazing honour to be mentioned in the same sentence."

Between the age of seven and 12, the author lived with her parents and sister in a 'mouse-infested, gothic looking house' in Penshurst, near Tonbridge.

The house holds fond memories for her, and she says it is likely to have had an impact upon her writing – inspiring some of her stories of a more 'spooky' nature.

Indeed, at the start of *The Lie Tree* the heroine and her family are relocating from a Kent village too.

"I am sure it had an effect. I was writing some fairly creepy stuff before moving to Penshurst but my interest in the gothic probably came from that time," she said.

"The house had a personality in the way that not all houses do and that influences the way you see these things.

“ Children's fiction has a reputation for being lightweight, simplistic and a bit fluffy... but it's serving the hungriest, smartest and most eager to learn minds. ”

Frances Hardinge,
author of *The Lie Tree*

"It's changed a lot now. The owners who bought it from us did something much more sensible with it and had it completely renovated.

"I haven't been back because I don't want reality to interfere with my memories of the place.

"I don't think my parents go back, it was a fairly clean break."

During her time living in the county she attended Penshurst Primary School, where she did well in her

studies and ended up ahead of her classmates.

"The headmaster of Penshurst Primary, instead of making me trudge on with the primary school textbooks secured me secondary school textbooks for English and maths.

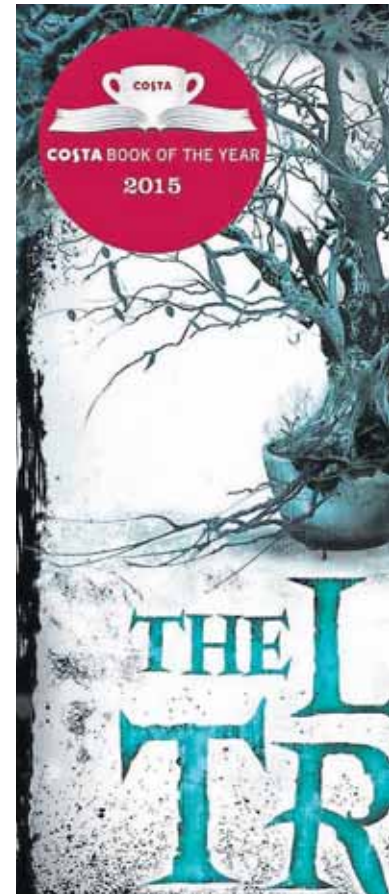
"He gave them to me and let me get on with it. When I got through my English textbooks he gave me Victorian novels, Tessa of the D'urbervilles was one of them.

"Thomas Hardy never became one of my favourite authors but I really respect him for doing that."

She said that she had been writing pretty much 'from the point where I could hold a pen or pencil'.

"I have recently started to read some of the pages that I wrote as a child, there's quite a lot of them including ones that I never showed to anybody," she said.

"Some of them really had a dark aspect to them, there's a poem called the Night Dragon about a dragon that slithers silently into towns when everyone's asleep and eats night pedestrians. That doesn't even have joined up hand writing."



WINNER: Frances Hardinge won

She later studied English at Oxford University and began working at a

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the Costa Book of the Year Award

software company, but still carried on writing.

It was a well-judged push from her friend - fellow author Rhiannon Lassiter - that helped lead Ms Hardinge to her present success, with her first book, *Fly By Night*, published by Macmillan in 2005.

"It was years of writing, a big dollop of luck and a very good friend," she said.

"We'd already been friends for a long time and I'd already been writing short stories for quite a while and started submitting them when I was 16. I accumulated a collection of rejection letters but the more you write the better you get.

"She suggested that we try writing something together.

"That didn't quite happen, we didn't have a single idea for a book but developed two - one each. We still enjoyed meeting up each week. We decided to give each other feedback on what we had written."

She showed Ms Lassiter some of the pages from *Fly By Night*.

"She said 'you do realise that's a children's book you're writing?', explained Ms Hardinge.

"She'd noticed something I hadn't - that my subject matter and my style was much more suited to children's fiction. When I'd written about five chapters she said that was good enough to send for submission.

"I said 'no, it's not good enough, it's just an experiment'.

"Rhiannon stole my chapters, took them to her editor and within a week I had a book deal.

"Rhiannon had been a published writer since she was in her teens."

She said that she hoped winning the award would bring children's literature - a subject that she is very passionate about - into the limelight,

and said that books do a great deal to help young people during their formative years.

"I think underestimating children's fiction is tantamount to underestimating younger children as readers," she said.

"It has a reputation for being lightweight, simplistic and a bit fluffy, but a lot of it really isn't.

"It's serving the hungriest, smartest and most eager to learn minds."

She added: "I think books are important to children in a hundred different ways.

"They allow you to explore and think through a lot of very important things. They can offer escape when you need it, as sometimes we all do.

"You work through some powerful stuff and consider very important issues. They help you see the world through countless different perspectives and understand people from different cultures, different genders, different times and they can tell you you're not alone.

"If there's something different about you you can find a book that tells you you're not the only person to have experienced this."

The *Lie Tree* addresses feminism as the character Faith becomes aware of the sexism present in the society that she lives in.

"Female education is something I take seriously," she said. "Not all my books are as obviously feminist as *The Little Tree* but some of them have a trace of that and my female characters tend to be quite complex in what I hope is not a stereotyped way."

So what's next for the author?

"I am writing another book for Macmillan. It's going to be fantasy, but a bit different."



WRITER: Frances Hardinge has been writing from a young age

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Our coastline you have never

Remarkable photographs shot through shoreline provide a view like no other.

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

THESE incredible images capture our coastline perhaps like never before.

Because in a style more synonymous with the surfing venues of Hawaii or a Pacific paradise island, one Kent artist has applied his talents to embracing the majesty and power of the sea and the way it crashes onto our beaches.

Ross Andrews, from Broadstairs, is perhaps best known in the county for the stunning sand art he created for Margate's Dreamland – picturing its logo in the seaside town's golden beaches.

Now he has turned his attention and camera lens at the sea.

He told us: "Having grown up on the Kent coast and spending a lot of time on the beaches with my sand art, I decided to get in the sea and take photographs of the shore break and the waves crashing in. This is seen more often in countries like Hawaii but I thought it would be good to

try here and see what was possible around the UK coastline.

"I was really pleased with my first shoot and quickly realised that, like my sand art, it would become a bit of an addiction. I have always been very passionate about the beaches and now I'm very fortunate to use both sand and sea in my chosen field of art and photography.

"I like to get the shot looking through the barrel of a wave and also to try to collaborate with the stretch of coastline I am shooting, bringing the land and sea together. I am out at every opportunity and now also photograph the local surfers.

"Every time I go out I have real sense of excitement, exhilaration and nerves as I often head into the water when it is at its most fierce. Of course, there is a real risk of danger when you are playing with nature but I have always been a strong swimmer and train hard to keep my fitness levels up. It is inevitable that injuries occur when being smashed into a rocky seabed but it's definitely worth it.

"The beauty with our water is that it is always changing colour, one day

ROLL: These images were taken using special equipment and, as the artist admits, put him often in danger



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captured like seen it before

the barrel of waves breaking on our
We speak to the artist behind them...



SNAP: Ross Andrew, far right, dons his wetsuit and takes to the sea to take a selection of remarkable photographs

it can be green the next blue and then maybe sandy brown or foamy white.

"No two waves look the same and with the ever changing light makes for catching some really great shots. I sometimes take my climbing gear and rope off over promenades to get close to the sea crashing in."

It is dangerous work, and Mr An-

draws said being well equipped is vital.

He went on: "Having the right kit is important. It is quite specialist and not always easily accessible in the UK.

"Fortunately I have a very good wetsuit specially designed for cold water use and comes in very handy

in the middle of January.

"I have had a really positive response with the photography and often people don't always believe the shots are of the Kent coast. I held my first exhibition at the end of last year and due to a great response have more planned for 2016.

"I now have sand and sea prints

available on my website and will be releasing some new additions very soon. I plan to shoot at as many beaches as possible but need the right conditions to get the shot."

He added: "To my knowledge I am the only person doing this in the UK, combining sand and sea in my chosen field of art and photography. It is

seen a lot around the world but generally people think it is not possible here due to lack of waves and dark water.

"When people see the shots they often don't believe it is shot of the coast of England."

■ To see more of his art, visit www.rossandrewsartist.co.uk



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Almost half of our care homes are 'not good enough'

Lack of staff, poor training, high-turnover rates, elderly going long periods unattended and failures to properly assess people's risks all highlighted by Care Quality Commission inspectors...

David Powles & Luke May
luke.may@archant.co.uk

CONCERNS have been raised about the living standards in some care homes in Kent after it emerged almost half have been branded not good enough by inspectors.

Since a new regime of checking care homes was introduced in November 2014, 128 of the 258 homes inspected so far in the county have been classed as requires improvement or inadequate.

Analysis of the reports has found many of the same concerns raised by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), such as lack of staff, poor training, high-turnover rates, the elderly going long periods unattended and failures to properly assess people's risks.

The figures come as fears were raised about the sector's future financial viability, as it struggles to cope with an increasingly elderly population, the introduction of the National Living Wage and local authority spending cuts.

The homes, a mixture of nursing and residential care providers, are rated overall and in five key areas: being caring and responsive, leadership, safety and effectiveness.

Of the 258 homes, four were outstanding, 126 were good, 112 requires improvement and 16 inadequate.

So far, only four homes in the county have been given an 'outstanding' rating.

Mark Lloyd is the general manager at Avante Care & Support Ltd, a care home business which currently has three homes in Kent rated as 'good' and one home in Chatham rated as 'outstanding'.

He explained why he thought care homes may be struggling.

"I think care is becoming more

complicated, the needs of people are far more varied particularly around things like dementia care.

"We're not exempt from the picture, we have had to close and sell off homes in the past, but we're coping well in a challenging market.

"We've been successful because we've got a great staffing team, and we invest in nursing care to cater for patient's specialist needs as well as having mental health specialists at our home."

The CQC itself raised concerns about the state of health care and adult social care in England for its 2014/15 State of Care report.

It concluded: "There are issues around the sustainability of provision due to the increasing complexity of people's care needs, significant cuts to local authority budgets, increasing costs, high vacancy rates and pressures from local commissioners to keep fees as low as possible."

It did find, however, that 60 per cent of services were providing good or outstanding care.

It found providers struggle to recruit staff and that turnover can be as high as 11 per cent for nurses in residential care.

Meanwhile, the number of adults receiving local authority-funded social care services fell from a high of around 1.8m in 2008/09 to just over 1.2m in 2013/14, placing further pressure on those who run homes.

Conservative MP for Maidstone, Helen Grant said: "These statistics are alarming and demonstrate that widespread improvements need to be made urgently.

"Thankfully the CQC's rigorous independent inspections are highlighting those establishments where change is needed in the ongoing challenge of ensuring all care homes are providing the best possible service and conditions."

Sue Howard, the CQC's deputy chief inspector for adult social care in

CARE: Are the elderly getting the care and help they deserve? What are your views? Let us know...

“ These statistics are alarming and demonstrate that widespread improvements need to be made urgently... ”

Helen Grant,
Maidstone MP

the central region, said: "It is always disappointing when we inspect adult social care services and find standards are falling short of what people should be able to expect.

"Our role is to make sure health and social care services provide people with safe, effective, compassionate, high-quality care.

"We encourage care services to improve and monitor, inspect and regulate services to make sure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety.

"We have received positive feedback about our new inspection methodology. We continually monitor the progress and improvements providers are making, for example, of those services we have inspected we saw a drop in the number of services rated as inadequate, from nine per cent to four per cent.

"Many of these were a result of re-inspections, where we were pleased to see real change and improvements for the people receiving care."

A 2015 report by Community Care found residential staff were missing out on vital training in dementia care, safeguarding and the Mental Capacity Act.

Meanwhile, a November report by the think tank ResPublica, in part-

nership with Four Seasons Health Care, HC-One and GMB, described Britain's residential care sector as being 'in crisis' and questioned its future viability.

It estimated nationally there would be a funding gap of over £1bn for older people's residential care by 2020/21, which could result in the loss of around 37,000 beds.

Factors in this include an increasing older population, over 65s make up 18 per cent of the population (and set to rise to 25 per cent by 2050), the introduction of the living wage, a large proportion of the health and care budget spend being spent on acute conditions and spending cuts which mean 90 per cent of local authorities now only provide funding for older people with substantial or critical needs.

It claimed that instances like the Southern Cross collapse, which saw dozens of homes close in 2011, will be repeated and this will end up with those residents displaced having to be looked after in hospitals, creating further bed-blocking problems.

Nationally, the government is pushing councils to treat people in their homes for longer.

But there are fears that could come at a cost, with homes closing and some elderly people ending up languishing on hospital wards, because they are not fit to go home, but there are no care homes to look after them.

Professor Martin Green, of Care England, echoed these fears, calling for the government to do more to set national guidelines to prevent a post-code lottery from emerging.

He added: "The government has shirked its responsibility and passed this to local authorities to be in charge of and that means we have some councils who are doing well and others who are languishing.

It needs to be consistent."

A Kent County Council spokesperson said: "Most care homes are privately owned and when concerns are raised about the standards of care provided, KCC will investigate through an adult safeguarding route, if appropriate, or a contractual monitoring visit to make sure that all residents are safeguarded.

"If a home is found to fall short of the required standards, KCC works intensively with the care homes and with CQC to improve standards and to make sure that the residents' well-being is protected.

"KCC has the power to place sanctions on a contracted home for the protection of the residents' welfare which may mean no further local authority residents are placed in the home.

"Failure to improve can result in residents who are placed by KCC to be placed elsewhere.

"However those people who fund themselves will be advised and supported by KCC, but the decision to leave a placement rests with themselves and their families."

CQC RATINGS FOR KENT CARE HOMES:

- Outstanding – 4 (2 per cent)
- Good – 126 (49 per cent)
- Requires Improvement – 112 (43 per cent)
- Inadequate – 16 (6 per cent)

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Listed status protects our Great War memorials

Chris Murphy reports on how a project to mark the Great War's centenary is extending protection through county

A HOST of war memorials across the county have become among the first to be handed listed status to protect them in the future and to mark the centenary of the First World War.

The bloody conflict of 1914-1918 claimed the lives of nine million soldiers and saw many millions of others wounded.

Historic England – previously known as English Heritage – is planning to list all 2,800 memorials in the country by 2018 to mark the centenary of the end of the conflict.

Along with the War Memorials Trust, it is offering advice and grants to help members of the public submit applications to have their local war memorials listed and repaired where necessary.

And in the first batch of memorials to have gain listed status over the last year are a host from the county.

Those that now have Grade II-listed status include memorials at The Hill in Northfleet; St Edith's Well in Kemsing High Street; Darenth Way, Shoreham; on the junction of The Row and High Street, Elham; The Grove, Prospect

Road, Hythe; and at the junction of Manston Road, Preston Road and High Street at Manston.

Now it is hoped many more in the county will follow suit.

Historic England told us: "There is money available to the owners of these memorials, which is usually the local council, to spend to ensure there are in excellent condition.

"This is the first time a large batch of war memorials have been granted listed status like this.

"It is important to many local people they are maintained properly, and with listed status, that will be ensured forever."

Grade II protection means the sites are considered of special interest and that "every effort should be made to preserve them". And that normally means it is far more complicated and expensive to secure planning permission if a listed site is involved.

The Historic England spokesperson added: "Historic England has pledged to list a total of 2,500 war memorials over the centenary of the First World War. To do this we need members of the public to put their war memorials forward for listing.



LISTED: The war memorial at The Hill in Northfleet. Pic: PAUL BENNETT

"This is all part of a wider partnership we have forged with War Memorials Trust, Civic Voice and the Imperial War Museums to help communities discover, care for and conserve their local war memorials. Working with enthusiastic volunteers across the country, the programme is providing up to £2million in grants for war memorial repair and conservation and hundreds of workshops to teach people how to record their memorials and put them forward for listing.

"Our goal is to see as many war memorials as possible are in a fitting con-

dition for the centenary, and they remain cherished local landmarks for generations to come."

Historic England said these essential structures were built by communities in the years following the conflict, offering a poignant, physical reminder of the sacrifices and loss the Great War brought about.

Campaigning organisation Kent Fallen has a 'roll of shame' website with 14 memorials in disrepair or neglected. It calls on the authorities to repair them. It claims three others have been rectified since they made the list.

Roger Bowdler is director of listing at Historic England. He said: "Researching, recording and recommending up to 2,500 more war memorials for listing over the next five years is a major task but one that Historic England is proud to undertake. These memorials will gain a place on the National Heritage List for England to tell the story of this country's sacrifice and struggle."

■ Anyone who thinks a memorial in Kent needs investment should visit the www.historicengland.org.uk website.

Author returns with fascinating look at how one village coped during the trauma of the Second World War

Retired journalist reveals how a German bomber crashed down in a local recreation ground and how the community rallied in the dark days of war. His latest book also takes a close look at the lives of those who made the ultimate sacrifice and are now listed on the village's war memorial...

A RETIRED Fleet Street journalist has published a book examining the impact of the Second World War on a village near Ashford.

Kennington at War 1939-1945, by Robin Britcher, tells how the village coped and of those who are remembered on the local war memorial.

The author, who spent many years working for the London Evening Standard, said: "During my research I met the families of many of those who died and others who lived here during the war. They had some remarkable stories to tell.

"There was the night a German

Heinkel bomber crash-landed on what is now the recreation ground in May 1941 after being shot down by a Spitfire. Neighbours rushed to pull the injured crew from the wreckage - even providing them with cups of tea before they were taken away."

The navigator Albert Hufenreuter, who suffered a broken leg, made an emotional return nearly 40 years later to visit those who had come to his aid.

Peter Huckstepp, who as a teenager had been one of the first to reach the plane, explains in the book: "There was a knock on my front door. A big man was standing

there and he introduced himself as Albert, the navigator of the plane. My wife and I invited him in, gave him a cup of tea, and he told us the whole story."

The German also visited the home of the couple whose garden fence the plane had destroyed to apologise.

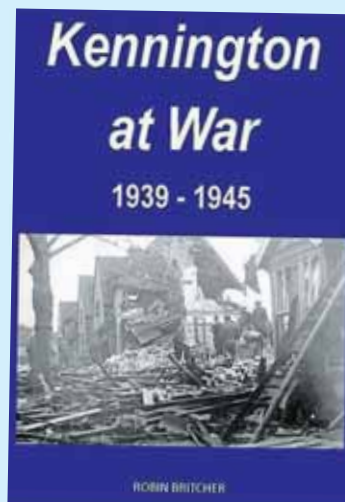
The next time the Luftwaffe came to Kennington was three days before Christmas 1943 when nine bombs were dropped bringing death and destruction.

On the lighter side there are memories of when food was so short rook pie was served for dinner, of ammunition stored in the

Congregational chapel and of the evacuees who were billeted with local families.

Mr Britcher, who is also the author of Kennington at War 1914-18, said: "I've always felt it was important that those who lost their lives should be more than just a name on the memorial - the youngest was only 14. I hope that by telling their stories they will be remembered by younger generations."

■ The book is available from Savers Newsagent, Faversham Road, Kennington, and Bockhanger Post Office, price £5.



Or by sending at cheque for £6.50, made payable to Robin Britcher to 169 Faversham Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent TN24 9AE.



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East European's from the EU are currently legal immigrants. Others are illegal immigrants seeking employment by entering the **BLACK ECONOMY OF KENT** and taking British Jobs.

It is not racist for saying **SECURITY NEEDS TO BE BEEFED UP**. Fergus Wilson is not a NAZI for stating the obvious. Nor are you a Nazi for voting for him!

Fergus Wilson will introduce a **REWARD** system of **£1,000** for reporting illegal immigrants in Kent, **£10,000** for reporting a Landlord housing illegal immigrants and **£20,000** for reporting lorry drivers smuggling in illegal immigrants. You can help by voting for Fergus Wilson.

Fergus Wilson says we need more Police Officers at Constable level! Currently we pay Alan Pughsley, the Chief Constable of Kent, more than the £142,500 we pay David Cameron, the Prime Minister!

We need a Pyramid system and a Chief Constable at the top. Fergus Wilson has no plans to remove the Chief Constable but Fergus Wilson could appoint nine Police Constables on the beat for the £198,000 salary of the Chief Constable. There are others at Police HQ in Maidstone and Fergus Wilson says unless they make themselves visible and justify their Salary Point they will go to make way for more Bobbies on the beat. There are too Many Chiefs and Not Enough Indians!

The post of Police and Crime Commissioner requires someone who is used to managing multi millions of pounds. It is what Oscar Wilde would call The Knowledge of a Lifetime!

There are two ways of dealing with Operation Stack. Fergus Wilson's Way and the Wrong Way! The 2016 Kent Police and Crime Commissioner election is a Referendum on Operation Stack says Fergus Wilson. We do not need more concrete in Kent for a lorry park. The Lorries must be turned back to the last pick up point and not allowed onto Kent Motorways. Save the £250m to deal with the rewards for reporting illegal immigrants.

Paid advertisement by Fergus Wilson.

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Are you embarrassed by your teeth?

An innovative new solution available for free for the next 36 hours...

Are you one of the thousands of people suffering in silence with painful, loose teeth or an ill-fitting denture?

Dr Pieter Claassen of Hanover House, a local dental clinic has seen a significant increase in the demand for dental implants since introducing a new, revolutionary system called PRGF, Plasma, Rich, Growth Factors - referred to as **ACCELERATED HEALING** by the **Hanover House dental implant team**.

This PRGF procedure encourages healing at an accelerated rate which means patients are able to go about their normal, everyday life without none or very little down-time.

Patients are travelling from all over the UK, demanding this unique treatment which has been helping sportsmen and women speed up the healing process following injury for a few years now.

The Problem

If you are one of the thousands of people suffering from missing or painful teeth you do not need to be reminded that it is very likely you will experience some or all of the following problems.

- Having to use fixative several times a day which is difficult to remove from your denture
- Your confidence has dropped
- You forget the last time you went on a date because you FEAR your little secret will be discovered.
- You don't enjoy food anymore because of the denture covering the roof of your mouth
- You find yourself talking with your hand in front of your mouth to either stop a loose denture from moving or to hide an embarrassing gap
- When did you last smile?
- You no longer join in for photos or when you do you stand at the back
- You can often hear a 'funny sound' when the denture chews against another denture or teeth
- You have as constant fear you will lose or break your dentures
- You suffer from bad posture due to a lack of confidence

The excitement

If you can identify with any of the points above it doesn't mean you need to suffer for the rest of your life, there is a solution for you!

Dr Claassen says, "Most patients have dental implants to stabilise loose and **uncomfortable dentures** or to replace **embarrassing missing teeth**. Having fixed teeth again means that they can eat and enjoy the food they want and have the confidence to smile in family photos again."

the first time ever **Hanover House Dental Practice** are offering the PRGF system **completely free** of charge when a dental implant is placed. Normally this amazing new treatment would cost **£350.00** but for a limited period only. Dr Claassen is offering it



Dr Claassen and his nurse Abbey with a patient discussing dental implants and how the PRGF system will provide many benefits

for **FREE**... Yes, **FREE**!

The brilliant PRGF system allows your own unique healing factors to help speed up the actual healing process. Patients experience less down-time and significantly less bruising and soreness following their treatment. **Using the revolutionary system also increases the success rate.**

Clinical Results

In a study of 1391 dental implants placed the success rate was **99.6% as published in J Oral Implantol. 2006;32(2):72-6 by Anitua EA**

Patients who have osteoporosis often receive Biphosphonate treatment to strengthen their bones. Unfortunately, in some cases it can lead to impaired healing of the bone. Using the PRGF system is excellent for patients potentially at risk after an extraction or when a dental implant is placed.

PRGF can be used when placing single implants as well as with multiple units where all the teeth are being replaced.

Ken Winch, a patient of Dr Claassen at Hanover House Dental Practice says..."I wasn't certain about going down this route but now I feel **SMILES** better!" which is evident in his before and after treatment photos below.



There are many benefits when patients make the life changing decision to have dental

In the several years PRGF has been used in different medical fields there has never been a reported side effect.

What people say

"Pieter worked painstakingly to achieve the perfect finish. The dental implants have given me back my smile and confidence and I no longer have to worry about what I eat" Mrs. P. Mahoney - Speldhurst

"Having dental implants was well worth the effort and the difference was extraordinary, making it the best decision I ever made. I used to be self-conscious about my teeth. I wouldn't eat in public in case my dentures fell out and I hated how they felt in my mouth. Since having dental implants I am so much happier. I can eat what I want, when I want, including apples and I am much more confident. Even my friends have commented on how happy and relaxed I look."
Stephen Barnham - Tonbridge

How to get this special product

Dr Claassen is so passionate about changing patients' lives with the use of dental implants and the PRGF system he wants to encourage and educate patients and let people know there is a solution for them and now with the use of PRGF the healing process is much quicker & less intrusive. Patients have been known to have a single implant in their lunch hour and go back to work!

The value of this treatment is normally £350 but for the next 36 hours its FREE when you book a free consultation.

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SUCCESS: Ben Bowman will be performing a number of Michael Jackson's songs

A performer with a love of Michael Jackson's classics

Molly Kersey-Law spoke to Ben Bowman about show Jackson Live In Concert

A MICHAEL Jackson impersonator from the Isle of Sheppey will be bringing his successful stage show to Gravesend and Margate.

Ben Bowman will be emulating the pop legend in Jackson Live In Concert.

As well as singing the performer's well-known hits, Mr Bowman will be recreating a number of his dance routines.

"The show is based on all of Michael Jackson's world tours - of which there are three," he told KoS. "It's a salute to him, his career and his music."

"There's some songs in there that Michael Jackson never performed live solo, like Can You Feel It and Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough."

Mr Bowman has been impersonating the musical legend

since he was a teenager.

"I began being a Michael Jackson impersonator when I was finishing up in school," he said.

"I started by performing in assembly, dancing to his music. It all started for me when one of my friends pointed out to me that I sound a lot like him when I sing."

"One of my teachers said 'you should really try and put a show together'."

"She helped me put together a show, it was my first one and from there I met my first manager. We went from there and bought costumes and equipment."

He started working with James Baker Productions in 2009 and collaborates with Sweeney Entertainment to put on the production.

"It took about a year to build it up," he said.

"In a year we were playing 3,000

seat theatres. It really has snowballed and we are extremely proud of what's happened to it, it's done incredibly well."

Mr Bowman is looking forward to performing in the county where he grew up.

"It's really great for me. It's really nice to see a good turn out for the shows that we do around here. I live in Walderslade now. I do love Kent, but I don't know where I'll end up."

So what helps Michael Jackson's music remain so popular?

Mr Bowman explained: "I genuinely believe that he cared about mankind and he really wanted his music to make a difference. I think people really relate to that. I certainly still see a lot of love for Michael Jackson, even though he's passed on there's so much love for him out there."

"It's incredible to watch the reac-

tion of some of the crowd who are keeping his legacy alive."

"Adele is a good example of the fact that no matter how many electronic, complicated things they come up with in the music industry, people still prefer a singer-songwriter that puts all their heart into their music, that's why they come back after years and years and do so well."

"I think Michael Jackson was one of those people, but times ten. He was a singer and dancer and all the rest of it."

Jackson Live In Concert will be at the Woodville, Gravesend, on February 12 at 7.30pm.

He will be performing at the Margate Winter Gardens on February 13 at 7.30pm.

For more details, visit www.woodville.co.uk or www.margatewintergardens.co.uk.

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Joe Pasquale is starring in this year's Orchard Theatre panto

By Molly Kersey-Law

molly.kersey-law@archant.co.uk

DARTFORD'S Orchard Theatre has announced that their pantomime this year will be Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, and tickets to the show are available now.

Well-known comedian and actor Joe Pasquale will be starring in the production.

Mr Pasquale has appeared in a number of stage shows such as The Producers and Spamalot, and he has presented TV shows including An Audience With Joe Pasquale and The Price Is Right.

He was crowned winner of ITV reality show I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here in 2004 and also appeared on Dancing On Ice.

He has also previously appeared in pantomimes including Cinderella, Peter Pan and Jack and the Beanstalk.

The Orchard Theatre has enjoyed a number of successful panto seasons before.

More than 30,000 people made their way to the theatre to watch last year's pantomime - Dick Whittington - starring EastEnders actor



PANTOMIME: Joe Pasquale will be taking part

Shane Richie as the title role.

Theatre director Chris Glover said: 'We were thrilled to present such a top quality production once again, receiving fantastic reviews from audiences and critics.'

'Customers are immediately booking for this year's pantomime, with over 6,500 tickets already sold for Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs, it's never too early to book.'

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs will be running at the Orchard Theatre from December 10 to 31, with performances at various times.

A number of access for all performances will also be taking place.

A signed performance will take place on December 14 at 7pm, a relaxed performance will take place on December 20 at 2pm and an

audio-described performance will be held on December 31 at 1pm.

Booking tickets to the pantomime early is advised to avoid disappointment.

For more information about the performances that are taking place or to book tickets to the show you can visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk.

Alternatively you can call the ticket office on 01322 220000.

Dane Baptiste up on stage

COMEDIAN Dane Baptiste will be performing his new show - Reasonable Doubts - at the Gulbenkian, Canterbury.

The performance will take place on March 6.

Call 01227 769075 to book.



Legally Blonde in Margate

MUSICAL Legally Blonde will be performed at the Margate Winter Gardens.

It is based on the hit film and tells the story of Elle Woods' journey through law school.

The show runs from May 11 to 14.

For more details, visit www.margatewintergardens.co.uk.

Beauty and the Beast

AN adaptation of Disney's Beauty and the Beast will be performed at the Stag Theatre, Sevenoaks, on February 13.

Performances will take place at 2pm and 6.30pm.

Call 01732 450175 to book.



Gargantua is in Dartford

MEMBERS of the Orchard Youth Theatre will be staging Carl Grose's Gargantua at the Orchard Theatre, Dartford, from February 21 to 22.

It tells the story of Mr and Mrs Mungus, whose baby turns out to be a monster with an insatiable appetite for anything that moves.

To book call the ticket office on 01322 220000.



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Broke 'N' Beat Collective

THE Broke 'N' Beat Collective will be performing at the Theatre Royal, Margate, on March 18 at 7.30pm. They combine hip hop, theatre and puppetry. Call 01843 292795 to book.



Girls Names in Ramsgate

BAND Girls Names will be performing at the Ramsgate Music Hall on February 20. They will be performing tracks from their new album Arms Around A Vision. The show starts at 7.30pm and tickets are £8. Visit www.ramsgatemusicchall.com for more details.

Frankie Boyle in Margate

COMEDIAN Frankie Boyle will be performing his new show - Hurt Like You've Never Been Loved - at Margate Winter Gardens on March 5. Tickets are £25. To book, call 01843 292795.



A beer and cider festival

A BEER and cider festival will be taking place at Crabble Corn Mill in May. It was showcase a range of beers and ciders and will take place over the last May Bank Holiday weekend - from May 27 to 29. Tickets can be purchased on the day or by visiting www.ccmf.org.uk.

Comedian Omid Djalili in two Kent venues

By Molly Kersey-Law
molly.kersey-law@archant.co.uk

AWARD-WINNING comedian and actor Omid Djalili will be performing at two Kent venues during his UK tour.

As well as having a successful comedy career, Mr Djalili has also appeared in West End shows, Hollywood films and TV shows.

His film credits include the Golden Globe award-nominated Shaun the Sheep Movie, Mr Nice, Gladiator, The Mummy and The Infidel.

Speaking about the numerous films he has appeared in, he said: "I don't have a favourite."

"The thing about movies is that they are filmed and captured in that state forever."

He added: "The reason I love stand up is because there is always the opportunity to improve it and make it better."

His current TV projects include Sky 1 series Stan Lee's The Lucky Man and BBC series Dickensian - in which he plays Mr Venus.

"He is a taxidermist who makes a fleeting appearance in Our Mutual Friend, Dickens' last



novel," he said.

"It's all of Dickens' characters in one original series. I'm a fan of the mega mix so I like the concept."

Speaking about Stan Lee's The Lucky Man, he added: "It's dark and tantalizing. It's about the power of having luck."

Mr Djalili will be at Whitstable's Horsebridge Centre on March 30 and 31 and the Hazlitt Theatre, Maidstone, on April 22, performing what has been referred to as 'his most relevant show to date'.

He will be discussing issues

including terror attacks, a subject that he has tackled in his shows before.

He said: "If a comedian is successful in lampooning so called human beings known as 'terrorists' we take a collective step closer to removing the fear in society that they seek to create."

For more information about the Whitstable performance or to book tickets you can call 01227 281174.

For tickets to the Maidstone show call 01622 758611.



MOVIE: Mr Djalili's film credits include Shaun The Sheep



LITERARY: Dickensian features Charles Dickens' characters

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January update from
your Independent MEP
for the South East
Janice Atkinson

Last week I travelled to Strasbourg for one of the twelve visits we MEPs make to vote in the European Parliament. MEPs have voted to abandon this travelling circus which costs £130m per annum but it is blocked by the French.

In last week's plenary we discussed the migrant crisis - (it's on the agenda again) - it's on the agenda every month. The unelected Commission has decided that EU states will have compulsory migrant quotas imposed upon them. A German minister helpfully suggested that we impose a fuel levy to fund this issue. This is in addition to the €3bn paid to Turkey to stem the migrant flow (with no limit). Turkey also demanded (bribed) that work visas should be waived and talks accelerated for Turkey's membership of the EU. Yet still the migrants come.

MEPs agreed that external borders should be strengthened. Some EU states are well ahead of this, ie Hungary, but they face 'sanctions for inhumane actions'. You cannot win. This month, three of the political groups asked that the sex attacks on women and school children across European cities and the media cover-ups be on the agenda. The Germans blocked the move. I spoke about it anyway.

I have visited Calais on a number of occasions and highlighted in Parliament that the majority of illegal immigrants in the camps are fit young men who are economic migrants, not refugees. Those that are genuine refugees should be returned to camps in the Middle East and north Africa to stay in their countries in safe havens and fight for their freedoms too.

We travel back to Strasbourg in early February. Again, we will discuss the crisis, much will be proposed, more British taxpayers' money will be spent but nothing done because of the inability of Parliament to recognise that the nation states and voters' views are very different to the bureaucrats' vision.

Janice

Janice Atkinson MEP
UK Delegation
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www.janiceatkinson.co.uk
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Tom and Henry's beer, bread and brotherly love

Francesca Gosling attends a masterclass with TV's Fabulous Baker Brothers, Tom and Henry Herbert

WHEN it comes to home cooking, there is nothing quite like the smell and taste of freshly-baked bread.

But - as my own experience confirms - making bread from scratch can be an arduous process that can go wrong at pretty much every stage.

Thankfully, help is at hand in the form of a masterclass with TV's Fabulous Baker Brothers, aka Tom and Henry Herbert, to try my hand at easy ways to make a range of loaves.

The brothers are experienced in pretty much every area of baking. But they faced a new challenge when they embarked on a project with brewer AB InBev, to create a range of

'Beer Bread' - bespoke bread recipes to match different beers.

"Both bread and beer were developed at the same time thousands of years ago by the Egyptians," says a thoroughly excited Tom.

"They share key ingredients, so they're natural bedfellows."

It's not long before I'm getting stuck in and having a go at making a pineapple soda bread (designed to perfectly compliment a chilled bottle of Stella Artois). Possibly one of the simplest types to bake, soda bread uses baking powder - rather than yeast - to rise, so it doesn't need proving, meaning there are fewer stages in the process to mess up. Instead of using regular flour, we start off with a base of spelt.

"It's a great source of fibre," says



BAKING: Henry and Tom Herbert

Henry, "and has a low GI, so it's quite good for you - and can even help prevent bowel cancer."

We mix it with buttermilk, pineapple and a splash of Stella, before getting our hands in to knead and squeeze it together.

After shaping our loaves into slightly flattened 'boules', cutting crosses into the tops to allow the heat through, and baking for about half an hour, we brush them with a glaze made from reduced Stella and pineapple juice, then sprinkle with barley.

"This bread is like eating a pina colada cocktail," says Tom.

While there was nowhere near enough time in the masterclass to try our hand at baking all the recipes the brothers have developed, we are giv-

en a limitless supply to taste.

My favourite is the apple, walnut, barley and malted wheat seeded loaf, designed to accompany a cold bottle of Beck's Vier. However, the clear winner in the room is the light and fluffy Hoegaarden-inspired brioche, flavoured with spiced orange and coriander.

The rest of the brothers' repertoire includes a traditional sourdough made from Hobbs House Bakery's own 60-year-old yeast starter, to partner with a golden goblet of Lefle, a crusty tiger bread to serve up as a hefty sandwich with a Budweiser and - Tom's favourite - a tangy sea salt and lime-encrusted cornbread, carrying the light and refreshing flavours of an ice-cold Corona.

Can we be content?

COMEDIAN Richard Herring will be bringing his new show - Happy Now - to Folkestone.

In his 12th solo stand-up show, Mr Herring explores whether or not we are meant to be truly content.

He will be performing at the Folkestone Quarterhouse on April 16 at 8pm.

For more information or to book tickets you can visit www.quarterhouse.co.uk.

Tale of The Bodyguard

HIT musical The Bodyguard will be performed in Canterbury.

It tells the story of bodyguard Frank Farmer, who is hired to protect celebrity Rachel Marron from a stalker and the two unexpectedly fall in love.

It will be at the Marlowe Theatre from February 17 to 27.

For more details or to book you can visit www.marlowetheatre.com.

Ballet due in Chatham

THE Russian State Ballet will be performing Sleeping Beauty in Chatham in October.

The classic ballet features composer Tchaikovsky's score.

The production will be at the Central Theatre on October 15.

Tickets to the performance start at £21.

For more information or to book tickets visit www.tickets.medway.gov.uk.

Opera in Folkestone

ELLEN Kent's production Tosca will be performed in Folkestone in May.

Presented by Opera and Ballet International, the show is set in Rome and deals with themes including love and treachery.

It will be at the Leas Cliff Hall on May 8. The performance will start at 7.30pm.

For more details or to book tickets to the show you can visit www.atgtickets.com/folkestone.

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Tobago keeps working its charm

TRAVEL REVIEW: Tobago

by Alex Dudok de Wit

FOR an island that's named after the stuff, Tobago is short on good tobacco. I'm drifting through the shops in the lush coastal hamlet of Castara, hoping to find something other than the dreaded red Du Maurier packs.

My search takes me up into the hills that enclose the village, where the houses thin out and give way to tropical foliage. I pass tethered goats, bamboo thickets and drooping rain trees, eventually stopping beneath a squat white Methodist church on a hilltop. My eyes take in the kaleidoscope of chlorophyll around me: lime yellows, grass greens, deep viridians - and, in a gap between the leaves, the dark sparkle of the sea. I feel calm; I no longer need the cigarettes.

This is my first time in the Caribbean. I've come to unwind. Tobago has built a burgeoning tourism industry around its image as a mellow alternative to its busier neighbours.

Showy resorts and tacky clubs are scarce; beaches are unspoiled; nowhere does tourism threaten to overwhelm the community. Everything is on a manageable scale.

The novel idea that you can enjoy yourself in a foreign country without infuriating the locals, upsetting their economy and wrecking their environment, which finds expression in the concept of sustainable tourism, is taking off here. I'm spending some time within one of the pioneers of the trend on the island: Castara Retreats, a fetching cluster of wood-built lodges set among the village's hills.

I'm put up in the Fisherman's Lodge, which used to be just that, before owners Steve and Sue bought and repurposed it as a sleekly furnished guesthouse. Over a daiquiri



SCENIC: Tobago has 'a score of secluded beaches'

on the Retreats' terrace bar, Steve - a bluff Welshman who looks like a slighter, sun-kissed David Bowie - lays out his creed: he aims to draw, as far as possible, on what's already there, such as local services and the island's natural resources. The Retreats should be integrated into Castara's community, not imposed on it.

Steve combines a forthright pragmatism with a keen interest in the people around him. Before long, he's

worked out I've never been fishing, and decides to do something about it.

The pace of the days in Castara may be slow, but it picks up in Steve's motorboat. He and his stepson, Callum, are taking me out to sea.

I unspool my fishing line, lean back and study the swiftly passing coastal scenery, occasionally pausing to reel in a bonito.

As our catch count climbs, the view shifts from the outer reaches of

Castara's cove to tree-capped rocky outcrops, then to white sand. We've reached Cotton Bay, a honeymoon-perfect beach with nobody on it - our lunch spot. The beach is inaccessible by road; we are alone with the lizards and pile of freshly caught bonito.

Tobago abounds in impossibly romantic hideaways. Cotton Bay is one of a score of secluded beaches peppering the coast. From these, one spies mysterious outlying islands.

TRAVEL FACTS

Alex Dudok de Wit was a guest of Visit Tobago.

Visit www.visit Tobago.gov.tt for more details.

Doubles at Castara Retreats (www.castararetreats.com) start from £80 with breakfast and doubles at Blue Waters Inn (www.bluewatersinn.com) start from £140.

British Airways fly from London Gatwick to Tobago from £495 return.

The view from my room at Blue Waters Inn, a tranquil seaside hotel where I spend a few nights en route to Castara, takes in Goat Island, on which stands a solitary house that may or may not have belonged to Ian Fleming (nobody's quite sure).

Behind it, Little Tobago - an uninhabited birdwatcher's paradise - lowers on the horizon. Then there's Tobago's dense Forest Reserve, the oldest forest conservation zone in the western hemisphere (est. 1776), and home to a delightful array of flora, fauna and purling waterfalls.

The sun rises early in Tobago. On my last day, I get up at dawn and head to the beach, where the local fishermen are casting a net the size of Belgium in the bay. I watch them scan the waters for fish and adjust their huge mesh.

Faces grown familiar pass me on the way, and we nod good morning. The cicadas are stirring; I walk up to join them among the trees in the hills. And from there I see it all below me in the brightening air: the houses, the people, the white sand and the dark sea beyond, all calm.

Once more, Tobago is working its charm - the clamour of city life has never seemed further away.

Film Reviews by Damon Smith



SPOTLIGHT (15, 129 mins) Drama/Thriller

AT its best, investigative journalism is a scalpel that slices through fatty rhetoric and cuts readers to the bones of institutions that should be defending our interests.

In early 2002, the Spotlight Investigations team of the Boston

Globe ran a series of meticulously researched articles, exposing the sexual abuse of minors in the Boston archdiocese.

Coverage of the scandal rippled far beyond the city and compelled other victims to come forward, which sent shockwaves through the Roman Catholic Church.

The newspaper was subsequently awarded the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service in Journalism for its courageous and comprehensive coverage, which lifted a heavy veil of secrecy stretching back several decades.

Thomas McCarthy's impeccably crafted drama pays tribute to the close-knit team of tenacious editors and reporters who tirelessly pursued the ugly truth and wrung their sweat and tears into the exposes.

Deputy Managing Editor Ben Bradlee Jr - played by John Slattery - presides over the Boston Globe

newsroom and has direct responsibility for the Spotlight team led by Walter "Robby" Robinson - played by Michael Keaton.

Down in the basement, Robby and colleagues Michael Rezendes (Mark Ruffalo), Sacha Pfeiffer (Rachel McAdams) and Matt Carroll (Brian d'Arcy) invest thousands of man hours following leads.

Their work is valuable, but costly, and incoming Boston Globe editor Marty Baron (Liev Schreiber) makes clear he is willing to make difficult cuts.

"I'm focused on finding a way to make this paper essential to its readers," he tells Robby.

The team is mired in a potentially explosive story.

Attorney Mitchell Garabedian (Stanley Tucci) claims to have documents which prove Cardinal Bernard Law (Len Cariou) knew about abuse within the diocese and



did nothing. Marty authorises Robby to quietly pursue the story before he is personally summoned to a meeting with the Cardinal.

Battle lines are drawn and Robby pleads with his writers to keep their emotions in check as they are confronted with horrific stories of shattered innocence.

"I don't want the Chancery getting wind of this before we know

what we have," he implores.

Spotlight is a clinical, precise and riveting dramatization of a bloody war of words in a city in the thrall of the church.

The ensemble cast are exemplary with Ruffalo gifted the film's stand-out scene of unfettered indignation that undoubtedly secured him an Oscar nomination as Best Supporting Actor.

SO, what to get your green-fingered loved one on Valentine's Day? Of course, the classic gift is a dozen red roses, but there are many more tokens which will last much longer.

The compact 'Darcey Bussell' from David Austin is a good bet, producing clusters of deep crimson rosette-shaped flowers all summer, combined with a fruity scent.

Prices start at £16.50. Visit www.davidaustinroses.co.uk for details.

The beautiful Peony 'Red Charm' from Claire Austin Hardy Plants is a gorgeous double glossy red peony that opens into a domed ball surrounded by large guard petals.

Growing to 81cm tall by 75cm wide, the flowers are held quite upright on thick, stiff stems and each flower blooms for ages.

They are £12 plus post and packaging, and available from www.claire-austin-hardyplants.co.uk.

The pretty blooms of pieris should be in bud by Valentine's Day and among the most eye-catching is the aptly named P. japonica 'Valley Valentine', with its cascading clusters of dusky red flowers, or alternatively opt for the Pieris japonica 'Ralto', which has variegated leaves and a pink flower, or Pieris 'Katsura', another variety with a red flower.

They are £12.99 from Hillier Garden Centres and available at other good garden centres.

If your Valentine prefers summer blooms which pack a romantic



GIFTS: Forbidden Fruit kit

Love grows on Valentine's Day

punch, treat her to a gift of Thompson and Morgan Begonia Majestic Mixed.

They are £22 for six tubers and available from www.qvcuk.com.

The new 'Wine' and 'Dine' Collections from Chiltern Seeds feature flowers with quaffable-sounding names including Clarkia purpurea 'Burgundy Wine', Lathyrus odoratus 'Beaujolais' and Scabiosa atropurpurea 'Beaujolais Bonnets', along with 'dining' varieties such as Strawberry 'Temptation', Capsicum chilli pepper 'Hungarian Black' and Asparagus 'Connover's Colossal', which come beautifully and romantically wrapped.

It costs £10 for five packets, available from www.chilternseeds.co.uk.

The Forbidden Fruit kit may be the

gift to get your loved one, a grow-your-own kit featuring two types of strawberries, goji berries, golden berries and Charentais melon.

With seeds, pots, peat, and tips on how to grow the plants included in the box, it has everything to start the plants off before transferring them to containers or beds in the garden.

Kits are priced at £12.99. Visit

www.gettingpersonal.co.uk.

Using iconic floral imagery from the RHS Lindley Library, the Rosa Chinensis gift set in gentle green and soft romantic pink features gloves, trowel, fork, secateurs and Kneelo Kneeler to provide all she needs for everyday gardening.

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Dartford has suffered enough

I BELIEVE dear Bob Lane has taken a wrong turn, as a crossing east of Gravesend will be bound to take traffic from the A2/M2 and may even have some of the M20/A20 traffic plus any local traffic from Gravesend.

I think he is being totally selfish. The area around the Dartford Crossing is now full of bursting, and must be given some relief as the traffic is only going to increase and going east is the only logical place.

Many locals here in Gravesend need the relief having a crossing closer and one that does not keep them in traffic for a couple of hours. So let's go for a crossing east of Gravesend and sort out the options of routes two, three or four.

GF Biggs,
Gravesend

We must stand and fight tunnel

IS HIGHWAYS England's lower Thames crossing cut and dry? I hope not. But why didn't they listen too us in 2013?

This environmental vandalism of our green belt, Option C, cutting through woodland, villages, people's homes, blighting lives, our wildlife, in the so-called name of progress.

What progress is building more roads? It's not solving the problem of congestion at all. More roads are only adding to the problem.

So I say a very big 'no' to Option C in Gravesham.

Rob Standing,
Gravesend

Consultation is without detail

I TRIED unsuccessfully today to make an informed decision with regards the proposed lower Thames crossing.

Unfortunately the proposed route map/maps on the consultation website are very basic showing no fine detail.

I therefore contacted "Highways England" using the telephone number given asking for a more detailed map. However the agent could not give me any of the finer details I required and I was informed this was not generally available. I was however informed a more detailed map could be seen at one of the many event meetings

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Take it on the chin, we've had it too long

IN RESPONSE to Bob Lane from Abridge2far (KoS, last week), I take it sir, that you live in and around the Gravesend area otherwise why else would you suggest a second bridge at Dartford?

As a Dartford resident, who lives a two-minute drive away from the tunnel approach, your proposal of another bridge next to the existing QE2 Bridge is totally abhorrent.

For years, Dartford residents have suffered pollution, noise and traffic congestion on a daily basis. Increased traffic volume over recent years has exacerbated the situation.

An example of the impact the Dartford Crossing has on resident's lives: yesterday I took my mother to Darent Valley Hospital and taking into account the congestion from the crossing, I allowed 30 minutes for what is a 10 minute car journey. It took 35 minutes for my mother and I to arrive and a further hour for our consultant to arrive who was also stuck in the traffic caused by the

Dartford Crossing.

Having another bridge next to the current one, serviced by the same roads, will not address the issue of traffic using the junction two roundabout as a short cut to the crossing and causing Dartford traffic to come to a complete standstill as in my example above.

If drivers know that they have an alternate route to take during congested times that is nearby, then it can only alleviate the pressure that the Dartford Crossing is currently under. A separate crossing will separate traffic approaching the crossing from the west and the south. A new crossing close to the M2 could service the traffic coming from the south coast ports and divert traffic away from the Dartford crossing.

So enough of 'not in my backyard' and give Dartford residents a break!

Joan Owen
Dartford

Ed needs his head examined

IN THE editor's column in KoS last week, Chris Britcher questioned the proposal for a new Dartford Crossing because "we need to guard against believing that more roads are the answer to all our transport ills".

Perhaps some of those "ills" could be solved if people stopped buying stuff!

Everything you buy will require movement by truck in various

stages of production and distribution, for example should we ban internet shopping as a first step?

Too many 'cars', well they cannot move on their own (for the present anyway). Every car has at least one person, so what quango is going to decide if you are allowed to drive?

Large cities like London have imposed 'green commissars' to dictate peoples travel modes, so is this the way forward?

Certainly not, if you believe in equality or basic human rights that millions died for in the last century.

Sadly, there are not too many 'cars' there is just too many people. Face that fact, do something about it and so many other 'problems' would just melt away.

Terry Hudson,
Whitstable

Being rid of EU will liberate us

I READ the letter of the week (KoS, last week) where John Vincent says that those wishing to leave the EU 'are looking down a telescope from the wrong end'.

My reaction to that is to say that at least we are looking down a telescope whereas Mr Vincent appears to be wearing blinkers and earmuffs.

He does not mention that the EU costs the UK a staggering £55m per day simply to be a 'member', nor does he acknowledge that the UK has run a trade deficit with the EU every year since we joined the Common Market in the 1970s.

For every one of our trucks going one way, five came our way. Just drive on the M20 and play the game of 'spot the UK truck'. It is very difficult to find many at all. And yet there still are people who claim the EU is good for the UK.

Does Mr Vincent believe the 'stay in' propaganda about us losing trade with the EU if (when) we leave it? It should be obvious to any intelligent person that the EU will want to continue to sell us their goods whether we are members or not.

Of course we will also be free to trade with the whole world without running to the EU for permission to do so; and we will at last be able to resume real trade with our Commonwealth friends, who we shamefully all but abandoned in favour of trading with Europe.

As for an uncertain world, it is Nato that we rely and not the EU, many countries of which have no true desire to help in any conflict.

I do hope that Mr Vincent, and like-minded 'stay in' people try to study both sides of the 'in/out' argument and not be swayed by spurious propaganda.

Terry Mullard,
Dymchurch

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AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

- 1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
- 2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
- 3) Be written in clear, concise English.
- 4) Not be overly sensational.
- 5) Have a sense of humour.
- 6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
- 7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
- 8) Highlight topical issues of concern to

people living in the county.

9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.

10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.



River Stour, Canterbury

by **Oliver Mannion**

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60s Party Break Stoke Rochford Hall, Lincs

30 April, 2016
Quote: SR4-2-KOS

Join us for a 60s-themed private party break at a super country house hotel in the heart of rural Lincolnshire. Stoke Rochford Hall, near Grantham, is a unique hotel housed in a historic Victorian mansion set in 28 acres of landscaped parkland. You will enjoy live 60s tribute acts both nights and guests have free access to the hotel's leisure club which provides a state-of-the-art gym, heated covered pool, sauna and steam room.

INCLUDED: 2 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV & tea/coffee tray • 2 dinners & 2 breakfasts • Live entertainment both nights • Free use of leisure facilities (indoor pool & gym)



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The Ultimate 60s Christmas Party Pontins Pakefield, Suffolk Coast

18 Nov, 2016 • Quote: XP11-KOS

Join us at Pontins Pakefield for a Fab Festive Party - for over 40s only - to get you in the mood for Christmas. With free drinks every night and non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to Sunday evening, this party is sure to be a blast. This years line-up includes: The Searchers, Union Gap, The New Honeycombs, The Cufflinks PLUS a tribute to Dusty Springfield.

INCLUDED: 3 Free drinks per person per night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers • 60s themed entertainment programme • 3 nights standard en-suite chalet - upgrade available • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners



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£129^{pp}**

Worthing Winter Warmer Party Chatsworth Hotel

11 March, 2016 • Quote: WG3-KOS

Join us in Worthing for a Winter Warmer Party and enjoy £1 drinks and live entertainment every night. The Chatsworth is one of the finest hotels on the south coast, just a stone's throw from the sea and a short stroll to the town centre. All bedrooms are en-suite and a lift services all floors.

INCLUDED: £1 drinks from 7pm to 10pm both evenings - pint of house beer or small glass of wine • 2 dinners and 2 breakfasts • Live nightly entertainment • 2 nights sharing an en-suite room with TV & free wifi



Free drinks
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Over 40s only
£10pp deposit

**3 NIGHTS
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Mamma Mia & Super 70s Party Pontins Pakefield, Suffolk Coast

8 July, 2016 • Quote: SS7-KOS

Join us at Pontins Pakefield, on the Suffolk coast, for a Super Summer Party - for over 40s only - to make the most of our favourite season. We've lined up a brilliant entertainment showbill featuring 70s themed music and nostalgia, including a live performance by 70s rock-n-rollers Showaddywaddy, a screening of Mamma Mia the movie, plus Abba and Rod Stewart tribute acts. With non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to Sunday evening and free drinks every night, this is one party weekend you won't want to miss.

INCLUDED: 3 Free drinks per person every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights en-suite chalet - upgrade available

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

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motoring reviews in...

KENT LIFE

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THE CAT IS BACK: Offering Jaguar's hallmark grace, space and pace, the new F-PACE looks set to be huge hit with buyers...

New F-PACE is Jaguar's ace

PREVIEW: All-new SUV evokes all the style and power of Jaguar's great and glorious heyday, highlighting that the brand is back...

JAGUAR'S advertising strapline in its original 1950s/1960s heyday was Grace, Pace and Space.

The same might apply to the British premium marque's first venture into SUVs and part of that legendary strapline appears in the new model's name – F-PACE – justified by lightness, excellent aerodynamics for low drag and high-speed stability and refinement, plus lively power options.

The mainstay engine is the eco-friendly 180PS (178bhp) 2.0-litre Ingenium diesel – the wonder unit that gives Jaguar's new XE and XF saloons a tax edge in the company car market.

There is also a supercharged 380PS (377bhp) 3.0-litre V6 petrol offering 0-62mph in 5.5 seconds; and a 300PS (298bhp) 3.0-litre V6 diesel for performance with decent economy.

'Grace' comes easily too: SUVs are rarely attractive, but this new Jag manages to be muscular yet elegant.

And 'Space'? A long wheelbase and short overhangs suggest a capacious cabin and class-leading rear knee-room, plus impressive 650-litre luggage compartment.

Priced aggressively from £34,170, the F-PACE nevertheless fields all the spec – including leather seats and smart roof rails – advanced technology and style that has put Jaguar back to the fore.

Most notable is the stiff yet lightweight



aluminium body construction, which delivers Jaguar's hallmark agility, refinement and efficiency.

Naturally at this level and to counter German rivals, the car is also offered with all-wheel drive (AWD) and smart traction technologies to suit various conditions.

And Jaguar claims to have installed the

world's most advanced infotainment system, InControl Touch Pro, designed in-house "to make every journey easier and more connected."

At its heart is a huge 10.2-inch iPad-style touchscreen claimed to be intuitive to use; up to eight devices can link with the Wi-Fi hotspot, turning the F-PACE into a mobile office for workdays or entertainment centre for the kids.

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Model shown Jeep Renegade 2.0 MULTIJET 140hp Longitude 4WD at £23,895 including Special Pastel Paint at £500. OFFICIAL FUEL CONSUMPTION FIGURES FOR JEEP RENEGADE RANGE MPG (L/100KM): EXTRA URBAN 47.9 (5.9) – 70.6 (4.0), URBAN 32.5 (8.7) – 55.4 (5.1), COMBINED 40.9 (6.9) – 64.2 (4.4), CO₂ EMISSIONS: 160 – 115 G/KM. Fuel consumption and CO₂ figures are obtained for comparative purposes in accordance with EC directives/regulations and may not be representative of real-life driving conditions. *Customer deposit is £5,845. Jeep Deposit is £1,500. Total Deposit £7,345. Optional Final Payment is £11,973. Contract Term is 24 months. Promotion available on Jeep Renegade 2.0 MultiJet 140hp Longitude 4WD at £23,895 including Special Pastel Paint registered by 31st March 2016. Jeep Deposit Contribution only available in conjunction with Jeep Horizon PCP. With Jeep Horizon you have the option to return the vehicle and not pay the final payment, subject to the vehicle not having exceeded an agreed annual mileage (a charge of 9p per mile for exceeding 10,000 miles per annum in this example) and being in good condition. Finance subject to status. Guarantees may be required. Terms and Conditions apply. Jeep Financial Services, PO Box 4465, Slough, SL1 0RW. Jeep® is a registered trademark of FCA US LLC.

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†Price shown is for an Isuzu Eiger Double Cab Commercial Vehicle On The Road with manual transmission, automatic transmission also available from £20,499 CVOTR. Commercial vehicle on the road price includes delivery, number plates, 12 months road fund licence and first registration fee, excludes VAT. *5 year/125,000 miles (whichever comes first) warranty applies to all new Isuzu D-Max models. Special paint finishes extra at £400 excluding VAT. Finance options available at participating dealers, subject to status. Terms and conditions apply. www.isuzu.co.uk



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The return of the original 'Joy Machine'

Honda's original HR-V failed to make a mark in what became a boom sector – can its successor do better? asks **Steve Loader...**

TIMING doesn't seem to be a Honda strength. The Japanese marque's latest HR-V arrived last year, a decade after its predecessor's failed attempt to open an SUV (sports utility vehicle) sector for younger buyers.

Touted as 'The Joy Machine', it brought little joy for Honda during six unremarkable years on sale, but the brand then simply watched as the sector it had targeted blossomed into one of the fastest growing and most lucrative.

So, the new HR-V (from £17,995) has its work cut out on re-entering the fray.

Fortunately, there's lots to like, notably its spacious interior in relation to exterior size, enabling it to rival the all-conquering yet bulkier Nissan Qashqai crossover, while appearing little larger than its ugly junior sibling, the Juke.

The Honda is also rakishly styled although the concealed rear door handles show that this styling ruse – originally conceived to make a car look like a coupe – is not only becoming clichéd, but used inappropriately here on a tall and most un-coupe like vehicle.

There are styling gaffes inside too:



the dashboard is well-ordered but dull – with an irritating sat nav system, if fitted – while the passenger side's slitted air vents look awful.

But this shouldn't detract from the flexibility of the car, which is roomy for passengers and has a bigger boot than the Qashqai – 453 litres with rear seats up, 1,026 litres seats down

– while also offering the 'Magic Seats' system borrowed from Honda's Jazz and Civic Hatchbacks.

This allows the rear seat bases to be fixed upright so tall items can be loaded into the rear floorwell. Perhaps even better, the under seat space can be readily used for extra stowage such as coats and bags.



However, those few would-be buyers who hanker for the rugged and sporty SUV image plus four-wheel drive will be disappointed to learn that this option is not offered – unlike most HR-V rivals. Indeed, that absence allows a number of cheaper non-SUV rivals such as the clever Citroën C4 Cactus to come

Honda 1.6 i-DTEC SE Navi Man

Price:	from £23,050
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	Citroën C4 Cactus

into a buyer's thoughts.

Two engines are offered on the HR-V: an all-new 130PS (128bhp) 1.5 litre i-VTEC petrol and a 120PS (118bhp) 1.6 litre i-DTEC diesel (from £20,245) with six-speed manual gearboxes or a newly-developed CVT (petrol only) automatic.

We can't speak for the petrol, but were impressed as ever by Honda's smooth and frugal 1.6 diesel.

It delivers plenty of low down clout for the taut handling HR-V and 0-62mph in 10.2 seconds, while offering the lowest payable road tax band (£20/year) and an official combined 68.9mpg.

The ride can be choppy on poorer roads, but Honda's mainstream/premium image and consistently high customer satisfaction stats are another HR-V compensation.

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Official Fuel Consumption in MPG (l/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km) for the 108 Range are: Urban 52.3 – 56.5 (5.4 – 5.0), Extra Urban 74.3 – 78.5 (3.8 – 3.6), Combined 65.7 – 68.9 (4.3 – 4.1) and CO₂ 99 – 95 (g/km). MPG figures are achieved under official EU test conditions, intended as a guide for comparative purposes only, and may not reflect actual on-the-road driving conditions. Terms and conditions apply, participating dealers only or visit peugeot.co.uk Peugeot Citroën Retail UK is acting as a credit broker and is not a lender. *Representative 4.9% APR over 37 months. To finance your purchase we will only introduce you to Peugeot Financial Services, the exclusive provider of Just Add Fuel®. A guarantee may be required. Finance provided by and written quotations available from PSA Finance UK Ltd t/a Peugeot Financial Services, Quadrant House, Princess Way, Redhill, RH1 1QA. *Vehicle tax is charged at a rate of £0 for Peugeot 108 as it falls within vehicle tax band A. The customer must apply for years 2 & 3 RFL. Just Add Fuel® is subject to status. *Minimum age 18, maximum age 75. Drivers are required to install the Telematics Box & consent to Data capture & transmission to qualify for insurance. All drivers must hold a full UK licence & meet eligibility criteria including limits on driving convictions & claims. Insurance subject to cancellation if you receive four warnings for poor driving. Excesses apply. 3 years motor insurance is provided and underwritten by U K Insurance Limited which is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. Payments will vary according to age, post code and annual mileage. Customer deposit may be required. The costs of insurance, servicing and Roadside Assistance are included within the monthly cost of Just Add Fuel® Passport but are provided on a monthly pay-as-you-go basis and can be cancelled at any time without penalty or affecting the remainder of the Just Add Fuel® Passport contract. Excess mileage charges may apply. Routine servicing included only. Excludes wear parts. All offers available on qualifying vehicles ordered and registered between 01/01/16 and 31/03/16 or until such time as they may be withdrawn by Peugeot at its complete discretion. Calls may be recorded for training purposes. Calls charged at local rate. All information correct at time of going to press. Visit peugeot.co.uk for full product details.

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Women Seeking

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DANCE partner 65-75 sought by Maureen, Thane based lady, slim, brown hair, green eyes, seeking dancing, fun and friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420231

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+. Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3002 Box 419673

SINGLE slim female, 68, n/s, GSOH, likes cooking, walking etc, seeks male, single, slim 65-70, n/s, with similar interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420091

DISCREET man wanted by married lady for no strings fun. I'm called Sarah and am 37yrs. P's call, ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 3006 Box 418167

SLIM female GSOH, 53, Likes walking, pub lunches, days out, looking for soul mate, smart appearance, similar interests N/S GSOH, easy going. Text only to Mailbox no: 476260

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. Tel: No: 0906 515 3010 Box: 409715

KIND lady, 50s, been broken hearted, seeks kind, genuine man for caring relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419889

LUCY first time advertiser, 32yrs, tall slim blonde airline worker, seeks discreet gent, any status for casual fling. Looks/age unimportant. Tel: 0906 515 3026 Box: 420237

PAT, slim, single, 68, non-smoker, GSOH, likes going for walks etc, seeks male, slim, single, 66-70, non-smoker, clean-shaven, GSOH, with similar interests. Canterbury area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419081

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel: 0906 515 3018 Box: 413399

MARION, early 70s, young at heart, GSOH, active, likes walking, gardening, meals out, travel, theatre and animals, looking for male friendship to share interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419657

SALLY, 24yrs tall brunette with feminine curves seeks mature older chap, 35+ for discreet fun only, must be experienced. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3030 Box: 420247

CHANTELLE, 5ft3 light brown/blonde hair, blue eyes, like nights in/out, walks, animals, romance seeks honest guy. Littlehampton. Text only to Mailbox no: 4923883

JASMINE, musical lady, husband in the forces and bored alone. 35yrs but loves older men. ACA. Text only Box: 4161836

MARIE, very lonely middle-aged woman, looking for a kind hearted older man, late 70s/early 80s for friendship/companionship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418955

KAREN, blue eyed blonde, size 14 with a large bust, 46yrs. Give me a call for some discreet chats. Text only Box: 4053061

RACHEL late 40s, blonde, blue eyes and very voluptuous. Looking for a kind, caring honest man. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418741

SALLY ANN, care worker for the elderly so loves older men. Im only 29yrs but very mature. Text only Box: 4145714

ESSEX lady, mid 60's, adaptable, seeking nice male, likes most things. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418537

AMANDA, 36, tall, slim, busty brunette seeks man, any age, any area, for discreet daytime fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418117

HELEN, widow 58, medium build, 5ft 4ins, blonde, GSOH, likes a chat, days out, looking to start again with someone of similar age. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376243

FEMALE, 59, GSOH, many interests, seeks caring male for fun friendship maybe more, genuine calls only. Text only to Mailbox No: 4819793

GORGEOUS flower, Ashford Kent, 51, larger lady, large personality, easy going, seeks male who likes dogs, animals for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417435

FEMALE easy going, kind, loving, genuine, romantic, car boots, gardening, seeking male with GSOH. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417603

PAT, 68, young at heart, slim, proud 4' 11" GSOH, N/S, likes walking etc. Whistler area, seeks similar slim easy going male 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419081

SUSIE fit, friendly, looking for someone to love and look after me, preferably older, N/S male with own car. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 392537

HAPPY young looking lady, 62, likes socialising, conversational seeking nice man to share good times with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407383

KATIE, 5ft 5, slim dark hair, very attractive female, likes most things in life and a good laugh, looking for a similar male. Text only to Mailbox No: 4722127

NICE female looking for decent genuine male for friendship to start out with. Text only to Mailbox No: 4710874

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BLONDE female, 5ft 1ins, size 12, likes meals out, drinks, nights in, walks, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409025

JAN 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349

ATTRACTIVE lady early 50's, petite, Scandinavian blonde professional, WLTm professional, caring gent, 50-60's for attention and future together. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416559

RACHEL attractive, blue eyes, blonde, voluptuous, seeking kind, honest, generous kind male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418403

JAN 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349

ALISON 39, petite with long brown hair, hazel eyes, very loving, seeking similar male for an uncomplicated relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416517

ALISON 30, pretty, slim with long brown hair, fit and active seeks fit older male for energetic relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416497

DEBORAH 41, intelligent, lovely brown eyes, discreet, many interests, seeks similar male to share fun and good conversation. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416515

ATTRACTIVE black, athletic lady, varied interests, seeks similar white, old fashioned, genuine male for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416215

MAY sexy black African female, 38, hardworking, seeks genuine friendly male for mutual rewarding friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416211

SUE young at heart, good looking, enjoy life, socialising, beach walks, gardening, theatre, seeking male, 55-65 to share life with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416171

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, just retired, own house, likes holidays, reading, cinema, WLTm similar professional lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420767

HASTINGS male, 51, 5ft10, medium-build, blue eyes, fair hair, fun loving, seeks female, 30-55, for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420745

MALE, 60, medium build, gosh, for no strings, discreet, daytime fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420621

CLINT, 37, kind, caring, honest and WLTm someone of any age who is similar and looking for a relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419951

HEALTHY 61yr old male, N/S, medium build, likes France, cooking, gardening, seeks female, 50-60 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 286360

ATTRACTIVE white gent, 48, 5ft8, romantic, easy going, GSOH, seeking young lady, 60-75 for quality discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410025

BROWN eyed white mature, handsome male, seeking black female, 18-50 for discreet no strings adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410377

MALE 47, builder, seeks lady for companionship and closeness, age and looks unimportant. Text only to Mailbox no: 4924811

JACKIE 32, attractive professional, very smart and feminine, long brown hair, seeks smart, confident, older male who knows how to treat a lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416297

BECKY 23, classy blonde, long blonde hair, blue eyes seeks loving older guy to spoil and pamper her. Discretion assured/guaranteed. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416233

LINDA 26, cheeky, curvy brunette, a little shy at first, likes to look after herself, seeks dark haired male for discreet naughty but fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416195

TERESA 39, petite, cuddly and bubbly seeks kind older male to travel, have fun, and take care of, pamper and flirt with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416081

LUCY stunning tall brunette, looking for exciting times, seeks like-minded, adventurous male who is willing to try anything once or maybe even twice! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416079

FEMALE seeking male for fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413809

MICK 50, seeks attractive female for nice times out, genuine calls only. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417691

PAUL 49 5ft 8ins likes eating/nights in/out seeks loving female for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 404013

PAUL GSOH, 5ft 8ins, medium build, seeking Miss Right for LTR to put the spark back into life. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 391970

PROFESSIONAL, romantic male, 44, likes meals out, cinema, music, holidays, seeks female, 30-55 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 250195

PAUL 48, 5ft 8ins, GSOH, likes music, cinema, seeks female for fun, friendship and LTR. Turnbridge Wells. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 371985

MALE 50, GSOH, looking for soul mate. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 387485

DAVE 46, seeks active female for walking, climbing and outdoor fun. Days out and evenings in. Friendly and GSOH. Text only to Mailbox no: 5338933

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, just retired, own house, loves holidays, WLTm a lady for meals out, and to enjoy each others company. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419751

SIX foot guy, mature, looking for someone special to spend some quality time with. Please leave me a message I would love to hear from you! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420163

HUBERT, lives in Rochester, single, lonely, looking for someone to get together with and make something happen and enjoy the rest of life with! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420049

45 year old male, looking for a happy intelligent friendly female for company and evenings in or out, looks or race unimportant. Text only to Mailbox no: 5063649

PAUL 52, seeks loving female for exciting times, meals out, week-ends away, cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418077

GARETH handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-65. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414421

MALE 56, likes good conversation, seeks older lady for discreet friendly fun, 50 plus. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419201

YOUNG 60yr old male, knows how to treat a lady, seeking special lady to spoil for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417909

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NICE looking genuine man would like to meet nice lady any age for company, outings with GSOH. Text only to Mailbox no: 4922399

ANDREW, 63, likes animals, walking, boot fairs, shopping, looking for someone similar living in the Maidstone/Kent area, for possible LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419203

RICHARD 59 from East Kent. WLTm genuine female 50 plus for friendship! Text only to Mailbox No: 4448765

PROFESSIONAL, romantic male, 44, likes meals out, cinema, music, holidays, seeks female, 30-55 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 250195

PAUL 48, 5ft 8ins, GSOH, likes music, cinema, seeks female for fun, friendship and LTR. Turnbridge Wells. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 371985

MALE 51, 5ft 8ins, N/S, GSOH, easygoing, seeks slim female, 18-45 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 338269

ROCKABILITY guy, seeks rock chick, 25-50 who likes 50's rock music and bands. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 284750

WHITE Knight 59 5'10 tall, OHAC, in shining armour, looking for Damsel in Distress of similar age to share fun & laughter. Text only to Mailbox no: 5073004

CALM, kind and good company, male seeking a lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419733

50YR old divorced white male, passionate, strong, seeking caring lady for romantic, loving relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418641

SUGAR Daddy available! Mature, tall, slim, natural dark hair, seeks lady, age unimportant. Not afraid of commitment. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418889



Gay Seeking

Who's caught your eye? Let them know you might be interested by sending them a WINK... Simply Text: WINK 2 + Adverb box no: 80098

MALE 56 yrs, GSOH, n/s, would like to meet a lady to have happy times, lots of love to give, to enjoy good times in and out. Text only to Mailbox No: 4181244

MIKE Canterbury mature 42, seeks single mummy, 28-42, slim-medium build for loving, caring relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415275

MALE, 39, tall, hardworking, 6ft 2, looking for long-term lover/older woman. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418877

WRITER tall, slim, dark hair, generous, seeking broadminded lady for fun times. Any age! Start. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412749

SENIOR bi male, 70s, n/s, clean-shaven, living in the Maidstone area, seeking similar bi male, aged 50-60, in the Maidstone area, for myself to give service to. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420219

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MALE likes CD, seeking similar male for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418513

BI guy heavy build, WLTm assertive adventurous white or Indian guy for mutual pleasure. Text only to Mailbox no: 4321273

SUBMISSIVE bi male, clean and shaven, looking for similar male, n/s, for adult fun, can accommodate. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420413

SENIOR bi male, 70s, n/s, clean-shaven, living in the Maidstone area, seeking similar bi male, aged 50-60, in the Maidstone area, for myself to give service to. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420219

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new reg 16

Record sales show confidence has returned...

CAR sales hit record levels in 2015 – 2.63 million vehicles.

It was the fourth consecutive year of growth and the 6.3 per cent rise in demand, exceeded all forecasts.

Significantly, the previous record dated from before the recession – 2003's 2.58 million landmark – surely a sign that confidence is back for UK PLC?

Last year's momentum also continued even in the run-up to Christmas – usually a time when buyers' thoughts are elsewhere – so that the market not only enjoyed its best ever December, but saw a weighty 8.4 per cent rise in registrations against December 2014.

The year's growth also came across all sectors, fleet and private, petrol and diesel, plus alternative fuel vehicles – electric and plug-in hybrids.

Mike Hawes, chief executive of motor industry mouthpiece, the SMMT, said: "The new car market defied expectations in 2015, hitting an all-time record driven by

strong consumer and business confidence. Buyers took advantage of attractive finance deals and low inflation to secure some of the most innovative, high tech and fuel efficient vehicles ever produced.

The past four years have seen a remarkable period of sustained growth, and the outlook remains positive with every reason to expect the market to hold broadly steady in 2016."

Check out the rest of our supplement for buying your new '16 plate' car



CATCH THE EYE: the Renault Captur has French chic plus practicality



ITALIAN FLAIR: New look FIAT 500 delivers image with supermini economy

DIFFERENTLY WE DO SLIGHTLY THINGS



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CITROËN prefers TOTAL. Offer applies to retail sales of qualifying models ordered & delivered 04/01-31/03/2016 or until such time as offers/prices may be withdrawn by Citroën at its complete discretion & include VAT, delivery to dealer & number plates, Government Registration Fee & 12 months' graduated vehicle excise duty. *Citroën SimplyDrive 3 year Personal Contract Purchase offer available on all Citroën C4 Cactus models. A deposit is required followed by 35 monthly payments, with an optional final payment at the end of the contract. Excess mileage charges will apply if you exceed the agreed annual mileage. Finance subject to status. A guarantee may be required. Over 18s only. Finance provided by & written quotations available on request from PSA Finance UK Limited (company registration number 010243221) / a Citroën Financial Services. Quadrant House, Princess Way, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 1QA, UK. Citroën Financial Services is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Jarrett Motors Ltd is acting as a credit broker & is not a lender. To finance your purchase we will only introduce you to Citroën Financial Services, the exclusive provider of SimplyDrive. The first year's Road Fund Licence (RFL) is included in the on the road price. The Dealer will provide customers with a cheque for the value of twice the current RFL cost. The customer must apply for year 2 & 3 RFL. Citroën SimplyDrive is subject to status. Minimum age 21, 25 or 30 on selected models, maximum age 75. Policyholder must have a minimum of 2 years' NCD to use on the vehicle. All drivers must meet eligibility criteria including minimum 2 years' full UK licence, driving convictions/claims limits. Excesses apply. 3 years' motor insurance is provided & underwritten by U K Insurance Limited, which is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. Payments will vary according to age, post code & annual mileage. The costs of insurance, servicing & Roadside Assistance are included within the monthly cost of Citroën SimplyDrive but are provided on a monthly pay-as-you-go basis & can be cancelled at any time without penalty or affecting the remainder of the Citroën SimplyDrive contract. Routine servicing included, excludes wear parts. This offer is not available in Northern Ireland. ¹Optional at extra cost on C4 Cactus Feel, available as standard on C4 Cactus Flair. Also includes rear parking sensors. Offers & specification correct at time of going to press from participating Dealers. Terms & conditions apply. Please ask us for details. Subject to stock availability.

Official Government fuel consumption figures (Range): Urban cycle, Extra urban, Combined (litres per 100km/mpg) & CO2 emissions (g/km); Highest: Citroën C4 Cactus PureTech 110 S&S manual 5.8/48.7, 4.0/70.6, 4.7/60.1, 107. Lowest: Citroën C4 Cactus BlueHDi 100 S&S ETG6 3.9/72.4, 3.2/88.3, 3.4/83.1, 89. MPG figures are achieved under official EU test conditions, intended as a guide for comparative purposes only, and may not reflect actual on-the-road driving conditions.

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Available on Solutions Personal Contract Plan. 18s and over. Subject to availability. Finance subject to status. Terms and conditions apply. Excess mileage charges of 44p per mile may apply. Offer available when ordered by 31 March 2016 from participating retailers. Offers are not available in conjunction with any other offer and may be varied or withdrawn at any time. Accurate at time of publication. Freepost ŠKODA Financial Services. We can introduce you to a limited number of lenders to assist with your purchase, who may pay us for introducing you to them. Model shown is Rapid SE with optional Camelot wheels (E670). Total OTR price is £16,045.

Official fuel consumption for the ŠKODA Rapid range for this offer in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 45.6 (6.2) to 67.3 (4.2); Extra Urban 67.3 (4.2) to 83.1 (3.4); Combined 57.7 (4.9) to 78.5 (3.6). CO₂ emissions for the ŠKODA Rapid range for this offer are 114 to 94 g/km. Standard EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.



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Fuel consumption figures for Fiat 500X Range in mpg (l/100km): Urban 32.5 (8.7) – 61.4 (4.6); Extra Urban 49.6 (5.7) – 74.3 (3.8); Combined 42.2 (6.7) – 68.9 (4.1). CO₂ emissions 157 – 107 g/km. Fuel consumption and CO₂ figures based on standard EU tests for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. Model shown is a Fiat 500X Pop which comes with all features listed as standard. Specification for other models may vary. Contact your local dealer for more information. *Promotion available on Fiat 500X Pop 1.6 E-Torq 110hp registered between 5th January and 31st March 2016. Fiat Deposit Contribution only available in conjunction with Fiat i-Deal PCP. With Fiat i-Deal you have the option to return the vehicle and not pay the final payment, subject to the vehicle not having exceeded an agreed annual mileage (a charge of 6p per mile for exceeding 10,000 miles per annum in this example) and being in good condition. Finance subject to status. Guarantees may be required. Terms and Conditions apply. At participating Dealers only. Fiat Financial Services, PO BOX 4465, Slough, SL1 0RW. We work with a number of creditors including Fiat Financial Services.



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Representative Example Renault CLIO Play 1.2 16V 75

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Before buying a new car...



DO Ask for trimmings like a tank of fuel, car mats or further discounts or extras.

Pick a model that saves fuel, insurance, road tax and depreciation – it isn't getting any easier out there.

Tread carefully with 'eco' models; check price, running costs, green credentials and savings on planned mileage versus years of ownership, then compare the closest standard version. The latter's overall savings might surprise you.

Make the most of your part exchange. Assuming you are not trading in a banger that the dealer will simply pack off to the nearest auction, it pays to make the most of your old car. Clean and polish it and replace obvious missing items such as a wheel cover or badge; don't give the salesman an excuse to mark its value down. And make sure all the paperwork and history is neatly packaged up to go with the car; be critical of your old motor and put right what you can without spending big.

DON'T Accept the first deal on offer – be ready to haggle.

Fall for what seems like a big bargain before you even haggle. It could be an unpopular engine/trim combination or a car on 'run-out' where production ceased a while ago, and might depreciate badly.

Assume a diesel will save; you usually pay more upfront for diesel power, so you must cover more miles to claw that money back in fuel economy. And the engines are generally heavier, causing more wear on front tyres and mechanicals. Meanwhile economy and emissions on small petrol cars have improved and they are often nicer to drive. In short - do your sums.

SO MUCH CHOICE: the Kia Picanto (left), the Citroen C1 and the Skoda Fabia are just some of the models and styles on offer



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'Eco' has a double meaning



F the Hyundai i20 – this is the SUV-styled Active version

BUYERS may have eco-logy in mind when buying their next car, but it's probably a long way behind eco-nomy.

They will be looking for the real savings on fuel and tax behind any 'eco' car's sales pitch – at least until the Chancellor's new road tax scheme applies in 2017.

For now tax bandings range from zero for cars with the lowest CO2 emissions (band A - below 100g/

km) right up to £505.

Even more crucially, you don't pay anything for low CO2 emitting cars in bands B-D for the first year, but the tax soars higher up the scale so that serious gas guzzlers in the top band, M, attract £1,100 tax in year one.

Anyone spending £50,000-100,000 on a car probably won't fret, but most people want to save fuel and tax, while also doing their bit for the environment.

Longer term, electric cars may be the answer, but battery technology must catch up and it's increasingly unclear whether the National Grid could cope with a stampede towards 'driving electric' anyway, so the latest trend is towards plug-in hybrids.

Better than a standard hybrid, these allow you to charge the batteries overnight or at the office during the day, so upfront travel costs are kept low.

There are also conventional 'eco' cars, but these are not always cheap, so shop around and note that if you don't cover enough miles to make fuel savings offset the car's purchase price, conventional alternatives may be a better bet.

Don't ignore petrol models either; concerns about harmful NOX (oxides of nitrogen) emissions from diesels, plus the higher price of the engines upfront should be compared

with lively new turbocharged small capacity petrol engines with low emissions and consumption.

It's clear the market is heeding concerns about NOX and the increasing efficiency of petrol: last year's record registration figures showed petrol enjoying greater growth (8.4 per cent versus 3 per cent) while equal market shares indicated that diesel's superiority was waning for the first time in decades.



PEOPLE MOVING MISER: carry up to seven and save with the Citroen C4 Picasso series



4X4 ON A BUDGET: the Jeep Renegade



KOREAN CASH SAVER: the Kia Rio supermini



VALUE WITH STYLE: the Skoda Octavia



FRENCH CHIC: Renault's Clio offers style and low running costs



TECHNO SAVER: state-of-the art Mazda CX-3 is frugal and fun



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According to the critics, different is great, because they voted the Citroën C4 Cactus hatchback of the year. It's full of clever ideas like the protective side airbumps and instead of the usual cluttered dash, there's a simple 7" touchscreen with built-in reversing camera.¹ We think it looks pretty cool too, but that's just what happens when you do things out of the ordinary.

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Official Government fuel consumption figures (Range): Urban cycle, Extra urban, Combined (litres per 100km/mpg) & CO2 emissions (g/km); Highest: Citroën C4 Cactus PureTech 110 S&S manual 5.8/48.7, 4.0/70.6, 4.7/60.1, 107. Lowest: Citroën C4 Cactus BlueHDi 100 S&S ETG6 3.9/72.4, 3.2/88.3, 3.4/83.1, 89. MPG figures are achieved under official EU test conditions, intended as a guide for comparative purposes only, and may not reflect actual on-the-road driving conditions.

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NORTH FARM INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, TUNBRIDGE WELLS, KENT, TN2 3EY www.thamestunbridgewells.citroen.co.uk

Take the test drive

By **Steve Loader**

ROAD testing your chosen new car is crucial before you sign the paperwork – you have plenty of time to regret a hasty purchase.

Our top tips:

Book early - New Reg is a busy time for dealers, so map out a 'test drive campaign' to drive your candidate models soon after one another, for more accurate comparisons. You are helped here by many dealers choosing 'motor city' sites like Broad Oak at Canterbury, Ashford's Orbital Park and Dowding Way, Tunbridge Wells - you can get from one dealer to another quickly.

Don't be hurried – yes, it is a busy period, but insist on enough time to drive the car in all situations: in town traffic, on the motorway - or some high speed cruising at least - and on less well-maintained rural roads. An hour should be sufficient - if you avoid getting stuck in a jam.

What are you looking for? - experience of different road surfaces, highlighting seating and ride comfort issues, plus engine, wind, tyre and mechanical noise. And especially...

Do you like the controls? – it used to be easy to switch from one car to another and quickly find your way around the dashboard, but many carmakers are now going their own way in search of the best ergonomics or human interaction, but they don't suit everyone. Just one bone of contention is the electronic handbrake and the many different installations.

Is it the right spec? - try to get a test car as close to the one you are interested in, even if you have to wait a few days extra or go to another dealership.

Make it a family outing - it can be a painful process of 'are we there yet?' proportions, but try to get as many of the would-be car users involved in the test drive - drivers and non-drivers. It can answer questions about comfort and visibility in the rear and, specifically, is there really room for three across the back seat, especially if one place has to take a strap-in child seat or booster as well? Also, can you lift shopping in and out of the boot easily or indeed, is there much of a boot?

Don't feel pressured - whether you have one or several candidates to check out, don't sit down and sign on the dotted line immediately. Go away and weigh your thoughts; maybe leave the salesman with a reason to be cheerful by asking whether it would be OK to come back for another test drive. If the reaction isn't good then you've learned something there too!



WHICH HORSE IS RIGHT FOR YOUR COURSE?: above the latest Kia Sportage SUV, left, Hyundai i10 city car, right, the Mazda2 supermini, below, the Renault Kadjar crossover, bottom left, Skoda Yeti SUV and bottom right the Citroen C4 Cactus hatchback.



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TOTAL	£3,248.75
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TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE	£14,467.33
OPTIONAL FINAL PAYMENT	£4,377.50
DURATION OF AGREEMENT	37 MONTHS
APR REPRESENTATIVE	APR 6.9%
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EXCESS MILEAGE CHARGE PER MILE	14.9P
ANNUAL MILEAGE	10,000



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HYUNDAI DEPOSIT CONTRIBUTION	NIL
TOTAL	£1,998.75
CASH PRICE OF VEHICLE	£7,995
TOTAL AMOUNT OF CREDIT	£5,996.25
INTEREST CHARGES	£923.22
TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE	£8,918.22
OPTIONAL FINAL PAYMENT	£2,868.75
DURATION OF AGREEMENT	37 MONTHS
APR REPRESENTATIVE	APR 6.9%
INTEREST FIXED	3.55% PA
EXCESS MILEAGE CHARGE PER MILE	14.9P
ANNUAL MILEAGE	10,000



HYUNDAI i20 SE
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MONTHLY PAYMENTS OF	£150.43
CUSTOMER DEPOSIT OF	£2,498.75
HYUNDAI DEPOSIT CONTRIBUTION	£250.00
TOTAL	£2,748.75
CASH PRICE OF VEHICLE	£10,995.00
TOTAL AMOUNT OF CREDIT	£8,246.25
INTEREST CHARGES	£1,286.73
TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE	£12,281.73
OPTIONAL FINAL PAYMENT	£4,117.50
DURATION OF AGREEMENT	37 MONTHS
APR REPRESENTATIVE	APR 6.9%
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(the "Company")

(Company number 00002920)

Registered Office: 41 Cambridge Road, Hastings
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Notice of extraordinary meeting

In accordance with Article 15.2 of the Articles of Association of the Company ("Articles"), the Company hereby gives notice that it intends to purchase the shares of certain shareholders of the Company who fall within the provisions of Article 15.2 ("Untraceable Shareholders"). The Untraceable Shareholders comprise those members from whom the Company has not had contact for a period of at least 24 months prior to the date of publication of this advertisement and whom the Company believes cannot (or their successors in title cannot) be traced without expenditure disproportionate to the nominal value of the member's shareholding in the Company. In the event that the Company has not received any communication from Untraceable Shareholders within 3 months of the date of this advertisement, the Company will buy back any such shares for the value specified in the share buyback agreement. Any Untraceable Shareholder or successor in title wishing to object to such a purchase should notify the Company at its registered office immediately and in any event reaching the Company prior to 5.00pm on 9 May 2016.

A list of the Untraceable Shareholders and the Company's Articles are available for inspection at the Company's registered office between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, until 5.00pm on 9 May 2016.

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For information please contact: Mr R Saffery (Finance Director) at **rogersaffery@kingethelbert.kent.sch.uk** by 29th February 2016.

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SAY anything WITH SMALL ADS

Touchdown! That Superbowl feeling

East Kent Mavericks on growth of the all-American sport

American Football

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

WITH 'the greatest show on turf' set to grace our screens this evening, the county's interest in American football is expected to experience its annual spike.

As millions across the pond settle down with a bag of chips to watch the Denver Broncos take on the Carolina Panthers, Brits are starting to embrace the culture and plenty will be glued to their television sets until the early hours of tomorrow morning.

Advertisers throw millions of dollars to plug their products during commercial breaks, such is the nature of Superbowl fever in the US, but the sport appears to be experiencing something of a boom in Kent, too.

The county currently boasts three gridiron teams: the Maidstone Pumas, the Kent Exiles of Orpington and the East Kent Mavericks.

Glenn Lindley, head coach of the Canterbury-based Mavericks side, told KoS: "It'll never be as popular as it is in the States.

"But year-on-year interest in the sport seems to be growing, as evidenced by the games being played at Wembley, where thousands are turning out to watch.

"The great thing about it in my opinion is that there's a position for everyone - big guys that you might just stick in goal in football can be the heroes for us.

"Likewise, small, quick guys are a real asset to the team, too."

A UK equivalent - dubbed the Brit-Bowl - takes place in August, where the winners of the northern and



EXCITEMENT: Fans of the sport will be glued to their TV screens tonight to watch the Superbowl
Photo: GETTY IMAGES

southern premier divisions do battle for glory.

Climbing the ranks slowly in division two, the Mavericks are some way off that level, but Lindley is pleased with his side's progress and its ever-growing numbers.

"I've been here 10 years, and the sport is booming in terms of the way

it includes all ages," he said.

"We've got teams at youth level opening up in Ashford, Folkestone and Thanet."

Anyone wanting to get involved in the sport is invited to pop down to the Mavericks' rookie day this afternoon (Sunday) at Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys at 3pm.

Pair blow rowers out of water over 3,000 miles

Rowing

A KENT rowing duo were victorious in the pairs class last weekend when competing in a race dubbed 'the toughest on Earth'.

Dan Parsons, 30, and Olly Clark, 31, completed a gruelling 3,000 mile crossing from the Canary Islands to Antigua as part of the Talisker Whiskey Atlantic Challenge in 42 days, 17 hours and 59 minutes.

Over the course of the six weeks, they battled storms, sharks and sunstroke, with improvisation involving a length of wire and duct tape preventing their tiny 22ft boat from being torn apart by the harsh conditions.

The team were sponsored by the Ashford based RIFT Group and have



HISTORY: Dan Parsons and Olly Clark

raised over £80,000 for their chosen charities Prostate Cancer UK and ABF, The Solider's Charity.

Parsons said: "This is first time I've taken on a challenge to this scale.

"We've experienced 30-40knot storms, a near miss with a cargo ship, a night capsized, horrific hallucinations from sleep deprivation, regular power failures that meant no water or auto-helm, and the most horrendous bottom sores.

"But to come through with a win and to have raised a huge amount of money for charity has made the sweat and tears worthwhile."

Clark, of the Royal Engineers, added: "During our darkest times, we maintained morale by reading messages from our family and friends.

"We could not have completed this challenge without the constant support we've received - we are forever in their debt."

Sport Shorts

» Email sports@kosmedia.co.uk or call Tom Pyman on 01233653477

Dartford teen Adams signs for Norwich City

DARTFORD teenager Ebrima 'Ebou' Adams has signed for Norwich City on an 18-month contract.

A product of the club's academy programme, Adams made his first team league debut at Macclesfield last season, and has started 15 times for the Darts this campaign.

The club described it as the best transfer in its history, with Adams becoming the first player on its books to sign for a Premier League side.

Part of the agreement is a pre-season friendly with the Canaries this summer.

In a letter to the fans, Adams said: "As a 15-year-old boy I never imagined I would have achieved what I have so far in my short career, and Dartford has given me the privilege to pull on the shirt and experience first team football and this is something I will be forever grateful for.

"I will keep in contact with the club, be down to see you play whenever I can and always look for the results.

"I wish you nothing but success."



BOSS: Dartford's Tony Burman



HOME: Even more Stones fans will be able to get into the Gallagher now

Maidstone capacity work comes to an end

THE capacity of Maidstone United's Gallagher Stadium has now officially been extended to 3,030.

A nine-month project that saw the Conway Main Stand almost double in size, and three turnstiles and two exits added finally came to a close when Kent Fire and Rescue Service issued a safety certificate this week.

The increased capacity was one of the requirements the club had to

meet when achieving promotion to the National League South, with the change needing to be signed off by the end of March.

Chief executive Bill Williams said: "It's not often in life you get excited by bits of paper but for us the issuing of this certificate is the culmination of months of hard work and investment to increase the stadium's capacity."

Samuel set to stay with Gills

DOMINIC Samuel will remain on loan at Priestfield until the end of the season after a deal was struck with Championship side, Reading.

The striker initially joined Gillingham in mid-November and has so far scored five goals in 13 appearances.

However, the player will now remain with the Gills until May 8, with an option to stay with the club

should they make the play-offs.

Manager Justin Edinburgh said: "This is great news for everybody at the club, Dominic has scored some important goals for us and we were always keen to secure his services for longer if the opportunity came up.

"We have now concluded the deal and we look forward to having him on board for the remainder of the season."

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